United Nations A/66/PV.35

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

35th plenary meeting
Monday, 17 October 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Meetarbhan (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 15 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/280)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/66/273)

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-General, on behalf of my delegation, for the report on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue contained in document A/66/280. Our appreciation also goes to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the report on the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, as contained in document A/66/273. We take note of the recommendations.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the fourth annual report of United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (A/66/305). It is encouraging to see the expansion in the membership of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations. That said, we welcome the convening of the Doha Forum in December and stand ready to host one of the events in future.

Indonesia has always dedicated itself to promoting mutual respect for religious and cultural diversity. We have keenly supported initiatives that deal with the challenges of cultural diversity. Dialogue and mutual cooperation among faiths and cultures are inherent to Indonesia's history. We have had centuries of practice in fostering tolerance and promoting cooperation among our immensely varied ethnic groups.

We profoundly believe in the wisdom of dialogue and its efficacy as a cure for ignorance, prejudice and hatred. As a result, we have been actively involved in dialogue, particularly interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at all levels. We have developed a strategy to empower moderates by actively involving interreligious civil society organizations.

At the national level, Government and civil society organizations have been working together on a number of initiatives, including the Forum for Harmony among Religious Groups. The Forum not only conducts dialogues among various religious leaders and groups, but also actively promotes religious harmony through social education campaigns.

At the international level, we have held bilateral interfaith dialogues with 16 other countries and the Holy See. We also launched a regional interfaith dialogue among South-East Asian and South-West Pacific countries in 2004, as well as the Asia-Europe Meeting Interfaith Dialogue (ASEM) in 2005. Both Dialogues have become annual events, and in that regard, we welcome the recent conclusion of the seventh Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Interfaith Dialogue, held last week in Manila.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Indonesia is of the view that the media plays an instrumental role in promoting and nurturing the culture of dialogue and cooperation among ethnicities, cultures, religions and civilizations. The mass media have the power to excite the masses. They also have the capacity to educate and enlighten, to impart wisdom to public opinion and to mediate public dialogue that leads to cooperation, peace and mutual respect.

In a democracy, freedom of the press ensures a dynamic free market of ideas in which prejudice and bigotry cannot rule. Understanding the strategic role of the media, Indonesia worked together with Norway to facilitate the Global Inter-Media Dialogue from 2006 to 2008. The three-year forum produced a network of journalists from different parts of the world who are committed to continuing to contribute to democratic life, emphasizing the core values and ethics of journalism built upon respect for the truth, independence and professional social responsibility.

All of those existing initiatives on interfaith, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue have become part of a global network aimed at promoting peace and harmony. But they would not suffice if they were to remain only within conference halls. We must recognize that dialogue is not an end in itself. Dialogue will amount to nothing if it does not lead to cooperation at the grass-roots level.

Finally, Indonesia would like to reiterate its commitment to supporting and closely working with international communities to promote interconnected dialogue initiatives, with a view to fostering a culture of peace, development and respect for human rights.

Mr. de Séllos (Brazil): Brazil wants to commend the continuous efforts of the Secretary-General to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue. In that regard, Brazil welcomes with great satisfaction both documents (A/66/280, A/66/273) presented for our analysis today under agenda item 15, "Culture of Peace".

As a multi-ethnic, multireligious nation, Brazil is strongly committed to the principles that inspire and guide the Alliance of Civilizations initiative. It was a great honour for my country to host in Rio de Janeiro, in May 2010, the third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations. In a celebration of diversity and inclusiveness, we were honoured to host 109 official delegations and more than 7,000 participants, including representatives of civil society, religious communities, political parties, academia, journalists, the private sector, youth movements as well as human rights defenders.

Despite many relevant efforts, we are confronted today with an increasing danger of division. We note with concern and deep regret that violent attacks against religious and ethnic minorities continue to occur in various regions of the world. Fighting xenophobia, extremism and racial hatred through education aimed at dialogue and tolerance must remain a major priority of the international community. As President Dilma Rousseff stressed in her recent message to the Assembly,

> "Since late 2010, we have witnessed a series of grass-roots demonstrations that have come to be known as the Arab Spring. Brazil is the adopted homeland of many immigrants from that part of the world. Brazilians sympathize with the pursuit of an ideal that belongs to no culture in particular, because it is by definition universal: freedom." (*A/66/PV.11, p. 8*)

Brazil strongly supports the Alliance of Civilizations initiative and considers it a highly effective tool of soft power for conflict prevention and the promotion of peace and understanding. The Doha Forum to be held in December represents a major challenge to the political construction of the Alliance. Accordingly, the ministerial meeting to be held during the Forum is highly anticipated.

Finally, inspired by the youthful and joyful spirit of the Rio Forum Declaration, Brazil wishes to thank Qatar for the invitation to the Doha Forum and to join efforts with all Member States in our common task of achieving significant results at that event.

Mr. Jabessa (Ethiopia): Each year, the General Assembly considers this agenda item because of its importance to the international community, and my delegation is always pleased to take part in this plenary annual debate on the Alliance of Civilizations.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (A/66/280) on the agenda item under consideration. My delegation is of the view that the report will enable us to be cognizant and appreciative of the activities of the United Nations and its affiliated entities with regard to dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions.

It is to be recalled that the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) clearly indicates that tolerance is one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and that it should include the active promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations.

The conduct of a dialogue among civilizations is an extremely valuable and timely issue that is needed to address, through combined efforts, the major challenges of religious intolerance and extremist tendencies that the world is currently facing. The major challenges and opportunities that the nations of the world are presented with today include the increasing diversity of our cultures, beliefs and values. Today's reality is that if we succeed in using our diversity to promote understanding and tolerance, that will become a source of great opportunities and strength for our multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual world. If we fail to use our diversity to work for the common good of our peoples, it will undoubtedly become a source of great weakness and challenges.

Recognizing dialogue as a powerful instrument to find a global solution to the problems of our world, which is often characterized by intolerance and cultural and religious divisions, it is indeed gratifying to note that the Alliance's last three consecutive forums have been useful and effective in addressing these key global challenges. In fact, the forums turned out to be exceptionally useful for the conduct of interactive dialogues among diverse faiths and beliefs and for the establishment of a global partnership aimed at undertaking collective efforts to tackle the problems of diversity and maximize its benefits so as to further promote an understanding of one another's cultural and religious differences.

We believe that the Alliance plays a central role in enabling States to conduct harmonious cross-cultural dialogues. In that regard, we expect that the fourth annual Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, which will take place in Doha this December, will make positive contributions to intercultural dialogue among nations.

Dialogue among different faiths and cultures aimed at maintaining global peace and international security, and for peaceful coexistence and international social cohesion between and among nations, is indeed critical. This is particularly true at a time when extremists are more than ever determined to exploit cultural and religious divisions to sow seeds of discord among nations. These extremist forces must not be allowed to use xenophobic intolerance to promote hatred and harmful attitudes among our societies. We must engage Governments, civic groups and organizations to prevent the dissemination of their evil ideas and defeat them through joint concerted actions.

Raising awareness about the danger that their ideas pose to our diverse cultural heritages and civilizations is one of best ways to ensure that they will not succeed in their efforts to foster clashes among nations. This can be done through the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, States, civil society and organizations at the national, regional and internationals levels, such as faith-based institutions and media. For this purpose, the Alliance could do more facilitation work by adopting a proactive policy aimed at bringing about attitudinal changes through the conduct of workshops, seminars and other forums for interactive dialogues.

Today's Ethiopia reflects the diverse nature of its peoples and nationalities, with their distinct cultures, religions, linguistic and ethnic characteristics. Ethiopia is also an ancient land with its own, centuries-old unique civilizations, traditions and customs. It is indeed a mosaic society in which peoples of different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds live peacefully with a strong sense of affinity with one another and in unity. This has been a trademark of our country for centuries. Our long history of tolerance and harmonious coexistence is a reflection of our uniqueness as a society of diverse faiths and cultures.

Aware of this reality, the Government of Ethiopia has taken various measures to further enhance our diversity in unity and has encouraged a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in our society. The adoption of a federal Constitution that enshrines and guarantees the basic human rights and the freedom of Ethiopians to pursue any religion or belief of their choice without restrictions is the most important and fundamental step taken in this regard. The fact that our Constitution clearly stipulates that the Ethiopian State is a secular one and that Ethiopians are free to practice any religion of their preference, and that our penal code does not allow any behaviour or act harmful to religious liberty, underscores the strong commitment of our Government to further enhancing and nurturing the values of diversity.

It is in line with these provisions of the Constitution and the policy that Ethiopia is pursuing that the Government is encouraging the strengthening of cultural tolerance and peaceful coexistence in society through various means, including teachings in schools and the media at the local and national levels. Moreover, the Government has created an environment for religious institutions, civic groups and the people at large that is conducive to conducting interactive dialogues, on a sustainable basis, to further promote tolerance and address challenges related to religious and cultural misunderstandings. This is indeed a fundamental departure from past ways of thinking and practices in our country.

Ethiopia has contributed actively to the efforts of the Alliance to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue, as we believe that it is necessary to prevent terrorists and extremists from using religious intolerance and cultural differences to achieve their evil objectives. We therefore remain committed to the Alliance, which offers us the best forum of a universal character that brings together all nations to make a meaningful impact on the ground.

In conclusion, let me assure the Assembly of Ethiopia's strong commitment to work together to ensure the continued successful work of the Alliance.

Mr. Meek (United States of America): The United States is grateful for the opportunity to speak on this important agenda item dealing with the culture of peace. The United States supports efforts around the world that create a forum for people with different views to express themselves through dialogue. That is why we support initiatives like last year's resolution 65/5, on World Interfaith Harmony Week, introduced by Jordan.

It is also why we joined the consensus in March at the Human Rights Council on its important resolution that addressed combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and the stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against, persons based on religion or belief (A/HRC/RES/16/18). That resolution signals an important turning point in the effort to address the use of collaboration to deal with the problem and we look forward to continuing our engagement with all countries on that issue.

The United States believes that peace can be achieved when people come together to understand, accept one another and shun the violence and hatred born of intolerance. Fostering mutual understanding and an inclusive social environment, in which the rights of all individuals, irrespective of religion or cultural background, are protected, provides the cornerstone for trust and lasting peace. The United States confirms unequivocally that freedom of expression and open dialogue among members of different religions and cultures are critical to combating intolerance and to promoting peaceful coexistence.

We hope that all Member States and relevant stakeholders throughout the world will contribute to strengthening the foundation of tolerance and respect for diversity and enhance the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms around the world.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's willingness and commitment to work with the Assembly and its President to advance the good work of the Organization on the most important matter of a culture of peace.

We all desire a world of peace and cooperation. Out of the horrors of two World Wars, we resolved to work closely together to rid the world of the threats of violence and destruction and to further strengthen the foundations of a just and equitable international order. Yet despite the advancements that we have made, we continue to face tremendous challenges. Despite our efforts to bring nations and peoples closer together in greater understanding, mutual respect and tolerance, dark elements continue to threaten to pull apart nations and individuals, feeding on rancour and resentment, inflicting pain and suffering and forcing violence and fear upon our world.

We must continue to be vigilant against those who seek to rend us apart. For 10 years, since 9/11, even as our memories continue to be haunted by the horrors of that act — which made victims of us all — we realize that those dark elements continue to linger. The hatred continues to fester. Its insidious form continues to mutate.

It is regrettable that our people have to endure violence in its many malevolent forms. Peoples are broken further apart by those who seek to sow confusion, doubt and suspicion and by those who prey on the disenfranchised and the marginalized and

surreptitiously use the faith of others, their culture and their religion, to push for and justify their own dark agenda. The Philippines joins other nations in condemning such acts in all their forms and manifestations. The Philippines likewise asserts that such acts should not be associated in any way with any culture, faith or religion.

For the Philippines — and indeed for the rest of the world — faith, culture and religion rightly give millions of people hope in this world, the will to treat others as they treat themselves and the impetus to work with others towards a more inclusive and more understanding world. It is that abiding belief that has moved us to try to help harness the world community's collective strength to further strengthen the foundations of a world respectful of humankind's diversity.

In that regard, the Philippines welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/66/280) and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the UNESCO report on the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/66/273). The report discusses, in a comprehensive and detailed manner, the efforts made to push the peace agenda into the place where it matters most: in the hearts and minds of people. The report likewise outlines the challenges we must address as we seek to build on the good work already being done.

The Philippines notes that the report underscores the cross-cutting nature of the work being done to foster a culture of peace and emphasizes the growing involvement of an ever-widening group of stakeholders among Member States and those within and outside the United Nations system, including civil society organizations, to accomplish our shared objectives.

The proclamation of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures serves to underscore the need to sustain our efforts in fostering dialogue. Included are our efforts, among other things, to provide greater opportunities for research, meetings, public debates and the like, promote the role of creativity and innovation in sending an effective message for intercultural and interreligious dialogue across many platforms, improve access to formal and non-formal education with emphasis on quality education for all and acknowledge the contributions of the media and of new information and communications technology to changing perceptions of different cultures and religions.

The International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures also made possible partnerships in about 1,000 projects that succeeded in achieving the key global objectives of the Year. That success highlights the importance of partnerships and the need to replicate our efforts at the grassroots level, where they matter most. The Philippines welcomes the conclusion that emerges from these activities:

> "[I]n the new international landscape, greater account must be taken of the linkages among cultural diversity, dialogue, development, security and peace." (*A/66/273, annex, para. 42*)

That was one of the main elements in the Philippines-sponsored resolution 65/138, on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, last year, which called for Member States to use, as appropriate and where applicable, interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals. We stand ready to work with other stakeholders to give life to, and further build on, that resolution.

We thank Pakistan, the principal sponsor, as well as the core group of sponsors and the nearly 50 other sponsors for their sustained partnership. Looking back on the years of work that have gone into that resolution and previous resolutions on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, we can see how Member States with diverse cultures, beliefs, religions and faiths have been able to transcend differences to work on the common objective of fostering a culture of peace. This is a living lesson in dialogue that the Organization should rightly be proud of, a living lesson that the Philippines and other partners are striving to replicate in our respective countries and regions.

The Philippines supports the findings in the Secretary-General's report, which states that the urgent need for linkages at the global, regional and local levels to promote such vital but fragile dialogue must be stressed. Even before this finding was laid out in this report, the Philippines had already been working at the international and regional levels to broaden religious and intercultural dialogue, most recently in the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development, held in Manila in 2010 — the

largest intergovernmental gathering convened to discuss ways to promote interfaith dialogue.

As I speak, the Philippines is continuing to do its part in encouraging this dialogue. This month the Philippines co-hosted, along with Finland and the European Union, the seventh Interfaith Dialogue of the Europe-Asia Meeting (ASEM) in Manila with the theme "Harnessing the benefits and addressing the challenges of migration to interfaith and intercultural dialogue".

As contained in its Manila Statement, the seventh ASEM Interfaith Dialogue discussed ways to promote mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity of cultures and for freedom of religion and beliefs in the context of increased mobility and people-to-people interaction. Those and other activities are positive contributions related to the recommendation in the report of the Director-General of UNESCO encouraging Member States to create links among organizations that are active in promoting intercultural dialogue and that are committed to fostering sustainable development and peace in order to create a new dynamic for living peacefully together.

The Philippines also appreciates the continuing work of the Alliance of Civilizations in promoting interfaith dialogue. The meeting in Doha will be an important opportunity to take stock of current efforts and to learn from the experiences of the participants.

In this regard too, the Philippines welcomes the development by UNESCO of an intersectoral and interdisciplinary Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, which the organization is expected to adopt at the thirty-sixth session of its General Conference this year.

The Philippines notes the activities undertaken by the United Nations system to promote intercultural dialogue. UNESCO and the United Nations Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs in particular have been working with stakeholders like the Philippines on providing opportunities to draw in civil society members such as religious non-governmental organizations to foster and develop ideas on how to move the agenda of a culture of peace further forward.

The Philippines would also like to underscore the important role the Secretariat's Department of Public Information can play in effectively and efficiently sending a message of peace and dialogue by reaching a broader sector across many platforms and at many points through the use of information and communications technology.

The Philippines likewise welcomes the rights-based approach to the dialogue among cultures and civilizations. Indeed, only within the context of human rights and a legal framework can we hope to further strengthen our efforts for greater understanding and mutual respect.

Before concluding, allow me once again to reaffirm the commitment of the Philippines to work with the President and other stakeholders to further advance the work we have done so far. Indeed, the road ahead and the journey forward remain long. However, we are confident that we will reach our destination. Fully resolved to turn our vision into reality, we will forge ahead undeterred, learning from each other, understanding from one another and respecting the other as we respect ourselves.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): Turkey welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the culture of peace (A/66/280). I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his personal engagement in this very important matter.

As a sponsor of the Alliance of Civilizations, we are particularly pleased to observe an increasing number of educational and awareness-raising activities to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We believe that cultural diversity is an integral part of the common heritage of humanity and an asset for the advancement of humankind. We should therefore accept differences, fight ignorance and prejudice, identify commonalities, respect others and encourage dialogue at every level.

To that end, we have been actively engaged in the activities carried out in the framework of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. These activities aim at improving global understanding by using various tools such as social media, education, research and new technologies. In this context, we want to recognize the important role played by UNESCO in the celebration of this Year and in the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

We believe that the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, which we launched together with Spain, is now a truly global peace initiative aimed at breaking

down walls of misperception, connecting people and building bridges towards peaceful cohabitation. We are pleased to see that a growing number of Member States embrace and act upon the ideals of the Alliance. Such wide recognition and support make us all the more hopeful for the future, as only the commitment of Member States to the ideals of cultural diversity can carry the Alliance of Civilizations agenda forward.

The fourth Forum of the Alliance, which will take place in Doha from 11 to 13 December, will be an important opportunity to reinforce commitments for action and to develop new strategies for an inclusive and open intercultural dialogue. We welcome Sheikha Mozah's suggestion to create synergies between the objectives of the Alliance and the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals. Let us not forget that eventually human development, security and peace are indivisible and are vital for our progress. We are therefore looking forward to actively contributing to the Doha Forum.

Finally, let me express our sincere belief that our continued efforts in this direction will produce a more tolerant and peaceful world for future generations.

Mr. Butt (Pakistan): While the world continues to witness violence and confrontation caused by longstanding political and territorial disputes, and the suffering they produce, new obstacles to peace have emerged in the shape of divisive policies or ideologies and resort to violent means, including terrorism. Economic suffering caused by the continuing global financial crisis has further shrunk the space for accommodation and understanding among peoples.

In the face of such discord and division, today's agenda item is a reminder of the importance of maintaining a culture of peace, which was the motivation behind the establishment of this very Organization, the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations enunciated the principles of practicing tolerance and living together in peace with one another as good neighbours, uniting our strength to maintain international peace and security, and promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

All religions and cultures share a common set of universal values: peace, tolerance and equality. Sharing and respect for humanity is the core message of all religions. Religion and culture must therefore not be allowed to become a source of division. We must cherish the unity and indivisibility of the human race and all humankind, no matter what religion or particular culture we belong to.

Unfortunately, though, there remain those in this world who thrive on chaos; they seek to draw power by pitting thought against thought, fate against fate, and people against people. Hate speech against religions are rampant. This only incites violence. Pakistan rejects such divisive policies, trends and practices and has joined with all efforts and forums aimed at uniting us as one human race, sharing a common set of values that promote the universal application of all human rights for all, in a non-discriminatory and non-selective manner.

The world must stand together to decry those who would use religion to advance a rigid and extremist political agenda. We must use religion as a bridge, bringing nations together, not as a wall keeping them apart. It is therefore critical that we undertake the task of building on faith as a means of finding common ground between different nations and civilizations. It was this very principle that motivated Pakistan and the Philippines to jointly sponsor the original resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (resolution 58/128). As in the past, the draft resolution will be presented again this year, and we are confident that, as at previous sessions, it will be endorsed unanimously by the General Assembly. This draft resolution stresses the need for promoting interreligious dialogue starting with the grassroots level, in order to address the unfounded misperceptions that result in divisiveness, intolerance and violence.

We are happy to note that this was also one of the important conclusions that emerged from the range of activities organized during the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. In an effort to promote this noble cause, Pakistan, together with the Philippines, also sponsored the seventh Asia-Europe Meeting Interfaith Dialogue in Manila this month, which again helped to highlight the ongoing challenges and the need to address them through enhanced interfaith and intercultural dialogue. We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/66/280), which appropriately highlights the important and cross-cutting nature of the work aimed at fostering a culture of peace, and the efforts made in that regard by a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society.

Pakistan fully recognizes the need for promoting religious and cultural harmony, and has taken several important steps to enhance initiatives to that end. There are interfaith committees at the national and district levels with representatives of all religions, in order to promote greater understanding, peace and harmony among followers of different religions. We have also created the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Foundation expressly to promote and encourage dialogue, inclusion and exchange within our society.

Promoting a culture of peace and avoiding conflict is not an easy task. It can only be achieved through understanding, sharing, sacrifice and dialogue among the parties concerned. The challenge we face every day is to replace fear with acceptance, harassment with tolerance and hatred with respect and understanding. Cooperation, and not the clash of civilizations, must be the paradigm of our collective efforts. To make the world a better place for our children, we all share the responsibility to highlight and propagate our common values of peace, tolerance, equality, sharing and respect for humankind. We should encourage the next generation, those who will lead after us, not only to use education and exchange to adapt to modernity, but also to use modernity and technology to change the world into a better and more peaceful place for all.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Concerning agenda item 15, entitled "Culture of peace", the Secretary-General's report (A/66/280) and note (A/66/273), which have been submitted for our consideration, praise dialogue between cultures, religions and civilizations. They provide an overview of the measures carried out within the framework of a programme of action for a culture of peace, namely, through education, sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, participation in democracy, understanding and tolerance, and international peace and security.

In the light of the criteria and recommendations contained in the report and the note, my delegation would like to add to this debate by sharing the experience of my own country, Cameroon. A country that has been called "Africa in miniature", owing to its geopolitical, geographic, human, religious and cultural diversity, Cameroon has always proclaimed and demonstrated its commitment to peace, both within and beyond its borders.

First, on peace within our borders: Cameroon's motto is "Peace, work, country". As is clear, the word "peace" is one of the elements of the trio; that is, the role, the importance and commitment to peace that have sustained our people and its leaders from the foundation of our State. It is this mystique of peace that since then has left an indelible mark on our national makeup in all its forms.

From a political standpoint, that mystique can be seen in our patient promotion and consolidation of an open political pluralism, with many political parties that cover the full ideological spectrum of modern political life. The party in power works unceasingly for peace, unity and development. The presidential election held on 9 October was another illustration of this, taking place in a peaceful atmosphere that was commended by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon the next day in a press statement conveyed by his Spokesperson. The same can be said of other observers present at the election.

Their Holinesses Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who both visited our country, twice in the case of the former, delivered ringing tributes to our Government for the efforts to build peace in our country. In general, from the political standpoint, those who know Cameroon well will notice that peace, tolerance and respect for diversity can be seen through the various individuals who head our principal constitutional and public bodies, a set of attitudes designed to preserve and promote peace among the various elements that make up our nation.

With regard to languages, the equality of the two official languages, French and English, as well as that of all the national languages, is guaranteed by the Constitution. It can be seen on a daily basis through an equal use of the two official languages in official records of the Republic, in the State media and in education.

In terms of economic development and land management, the State has been striving to invest in infrastructure in the different regions of our national territory according to their potential, which is quite varied because of a very diverse geography, which goes from the Atlantic coast through the equatorial forest to the Sahel.

Freedom of worship and religion is a right guaranteed by the Constitution. Cameroon is a country where we find side by side, in tolerance and mutual

understanding, monotheistic religions such as Islam and Christianity, atheistic spirituality and, of course, African religions, which form our shared spiritual foundation.

That is what I can say about our commitment to peace in respect for diversity within our borders.

Now, let us look outside our borders. Two primary principles, among several, guide Cameroon's foreign policy, and this is in accordance with the Constitution and the Charter of the United Nations. The first principle is that of a policy of good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence. The second is that of peaceful settlement of disputes.

With respect to the first principle, Cameroon shares its borders with Nigeria, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. Cameroon has excellent neighbourly relations with all of these countries. In case of a dispute, as was the situation at one point with Nigeria concerning the Bakassi peninsula, our country prefers peaceful settlement and mediation — the peaceful settlement by jurisdictional means, in this case the acceptance of the optional clause of the mandatory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. That led to the Court's decision in October 2002 and to mediation by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and friendly countries for the implementation of the decision.

That is how my country is striving to preserve domestic and foreign peace within a political, cultural, linguistically and religiously diverse context. My delegation is pleased that this option, chosen by the senior officials in my country, is on the same wavelength as the principles, values, objectives and actions of the United Nations, and in this particular case with the conclusions of the reports of the Secretary-General and the Director-General of UNESCO, which have been submitted for our consideration today.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): As the General Assembly once again takes up this agenda item, my delegation draws attention to the critical role that the United Nations plays in the promotion and strengthening of a culture of peace throughout the world.

As the Declaration on a Culture of Peace (resolution 53/243) affirmed, such a culture must be based on respect for life, ending of violence and the promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation. The fuller development of a culture of peace is integrally linked to advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all civilizations, peoples and cultures, including with regard to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. This is as important now as it was when the Declaration was proclaimed, for Governments have a responsibility to respect and protect all persons, to foster peace and to promote education, dialogue and cooperation for the building of a society marked by harmonious coexistence.

During the general debate of the sixty-sixth session, my delegation affirmed that respect for religious liberty is the fundamental path for peacebuilding, the recognition of human dignity and the safeguarding of the rights of the human person. Unfortunately, today there are numerous situations in which the right of religious liberty is injured or denied, especially for believers of different religions. There is an increase in religiously motivated intolerance, and, unfortunately, one sees that Christians in various parts of the world are increasingly subjected to discrimination and violence because of their faith, including the recent tragic incidents in Egypt.

The lack of respect for religious freedom is a threat to security and peace and impedes the realization of authentic, integral human development. The particular influence of a specific religion in a nation should never imply that citizens belonging to other confessions are discriminated against in social life or, worse still, that violence against them is tolerated.

In that connection, a common commitment to recognizing and promoting the religious liberty of every person and every community is favoured by sincere interreligious dialogue. Governments and international agencies are called on to support such work among individuals and communities. Effective measures must be adopted for the protection of all religious minorities wherever they are threatened, in order that, above all, believers of all confessions can live in security and continue to make their contribution to the society of which they are members.

Unfortunately, there are also countries in the world today, especially some so-called developed

countries, in which, although great importance is given to pluralism and tolerance, religion tends paradoxically to be considered as a factor foreign or destabilizing to modern society, in which different means are sought to marginalize religion and impede it from influencing social life.

Yet it is an undeniable fact that the great religions of the world have made a significant contribution to the development of civilization, as the sincere search for God has led to greater respect for the dignity of the human person. Christian communities, with their patrimonies of values and principles, have contributed strongly to individuals' and peoples' awareness of their identity and dignity, as well as to the triumph of the institutions of the rule of law and to the affirmation of the rights of the human person and of his or her corresponding duties. From that perspective, it is important that believers feel as free today as yesterday to offer their contribution to the promotion of the just regulation of human realities, both through responsible commitments at the civil, economic and political level and through the witness of their charity and faith.

My delegation is aware of the many activities carried out by the main United Nations entities in the field of dialogue. In that regard, it is essential that the activities carried out by those actors truly support cultures and religions in building a culture of peace. That means fully respecting the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of people in conformity with universally recognized human rights.

The principles upon which the Organization was founded are a constant reminder for all States to commit themselves to bringing an end to all conflicts and building peaceful coexistence among all peoples. That requires Governments to work to protect all of their citizens and promote mutual understanding. The more that Governments are able to do this, the more they will able to achieve their purpose, namely, the promotion of the common good, which necessarily entails recognition, respect, defence and promotion of the rights of all persons.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Lobry-Boulanger (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): On the heels of the International Day of Non-Violence and following the theme of this year's general debate — "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means" — the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) welcomes this timely debate on a culture of peace. The IFRC further welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General (A/66/280) and of the Director-General of UNESCO (see A/66/273) on this agenda item, and the progress described in them.

The IFRC is strongly committed to fostering a global culture of respect for diversity, non-violence and peace, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion where human values and dignity are truly celebrated. Indeed, promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace is one of the IFRC's three organizational priorities for the present decade.

Based on the extensive experience of our 186 National Societies at the community level, today I would like to touch on the role of values and skills-based education, the importance of engaging and empowering youth and the promotion of non-violence.

We all carry biases and prejudice from our upbringing, schooling, media and other influences. Addressing violent expressions such as discrimination and exclusion requires a change of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours at the level of the individual and an enabling environment for that change to happen. One place to start is reinforcement of the role of education, both formal and informal, in the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace, not only in schools but in a variety of settings such as family, sports and social activities.

In his report on current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education, the Secretary-General states that "Schools should be seen first and foremost as places for imparting the most vital skills: tolerance, mutual respect and the ability to live peacefully with others" (*E/2011/82, para. 79*). The IFRC supports that view and believes that schools, along with other settings, present opportunities for us to learn values such as respect for diversity, mutual understanding, compassion and cooperation, and to develop skills like empathy, non-violent communication and peaceful resolution of tensions. In short, a values and skills-based education is vital to transforming the ways we relate to each other.

Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change — YABC — is a flagship initiative of the IFRC that

places youth at the centre of efforts to promote a culture of non-violence and peace through informal values and skills-based peer education. The initiative was created for youth and with youth in the Red Cross Red Crescent worldwide and empowers them to assume a leadership role in transforming their local communities. The YABC initiative uses a non-cognitive methodology, peer education and innovative platforms such as games, role-playing, visualization, drama, dance, arts, relaxation and movement. It has been met by great appreciation of both youth and parents.

Teachers have also welcomed the YABC methodology within formal education systems. For example, the French Red Cross, which partners with its Government in providing humanitarian values education in schools, has begun utilizing the YABC methodology in its work, with great success. The IFRC encourages the institutionalization of values and skills-based education in formal school curricula at the national level, starting in primary and pre-school levels, as well as its inclusion in informal education.

In the face of levels of violence that affect all continents, countries and communities, a values and skills-based education can help us address the underlying causes, especially when coupled with initiatives that foster social inclusion and respect for diversity and that build resilience against violence. Our goal must be to promote a culture where violence is never an option. Since violence risk factors exist at multiple levels — individual, family, community, social and cultural — it is possible to work in each level and thus enhance resilience. In other words, we can build individual or community capacity to adapt to and remain strong in the face of adversity.

Concretely, communities that invest in programmes that proactively prevent stigma, gender inequality and abuse, among many other activities and that empower vulnerable groups of people will become stronger and less prone to violence. It is important to target youth and communities most at risk. For example, our member National Societies in the Central American and Caribbean region are addressing youth at risk of exclusion in 11 urban and suburban areas by increasing their social and institutional skills through the Regional Strategy on Violence Prevention project. Another example is the Soccer Against Violence project of the South African Red Cross, which inculcates values such as tolerance, self-discipline and personal development in youth at risk — youth who face high levels of violence, intolerance and social crimes, among other factors.

Given that differences of opinion and disagreements are a normal part of humanity, the real question is: how can we deal with them in a constructive way? Pursuing values and skills-based education, empowering youth and investing in violence prevention are all concrete actions we can take to help transform mindsets, attitudes and behaviours. In all corners of the world, communities today face challenges that require creative and constructive solutions that foster a culture of peace.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 15. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of item 15.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Request for the inclusion of an additional sub-item submitted by the Secretary-General (A/66/231)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take up a request submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/66/231 relating to the membership of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee. In his note, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly of the resignation of Andrei Kovalenko from the membership of the Staff Pension Committee effective 19 September. A vacancy in the Committee therefore occurred on that date.

As the agenda of the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly does not contain a sub-item on the appointment of members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee, the Secretary-General has therefore deemed it necessary to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional sub-item entitled "Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee", under agenda item 115, "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments".

Owing to the nature of the item, unless there is an objection, may I take it that the General Assembly

agrees that the relevant provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this additional sub-item on the agenda, could be waived?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include in the agenda of the current session an additional sub-item entitled "Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee" as a sub-item of agenda item 115 under Heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters"?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Secretary-General has requested that the sub-item be allocated to the Fifth Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to allocate this sub-item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should like to inform embers that this additional sub-item becomes sub-item (k) of agenda item 115 on the agenda of the current session.

Documentation for the election of the members of the International Law Commission

The Acting President: I would now like to consult the General Assembly on a matter concerning sub-item (b) of agenda item 114, "Election of the members of the International Law Commission", which election has been scheduled to take place on Thursday, 17 November 2011. On that day, the Assembly will proceed to the election of 34 members of the Commission, whose terms of office are to commence on 1 January 2012. It should be recalled that, in accordance with the statute of the International Law Commission, the Secretary-General communicated to the Governments of Member States, in document A/66/88, the list of candidates submitted within the required time for the submission of nominations, that is, by 1 June 2011.

In documents A/66/88/Add.1, Add.2 and Add.3, the Secretary-General reported developments concerning candidates, including new candidates and a withdrawal, since the issuance of document A/66/88. The statements of qualifications of the candidates are contained in document A/66/90 and Add.1 and Add.2.

Under these circumstances, it is necessary for the General Assembly to take a decision as to whether the new candidatures should be accepted in spite of the submission of their names subsequent to the deadline and whether they should be incorporated into a consolidated list of candidates. It has been the practice of the Assembly to incorporate such late submissions into a consolidated list.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to issue such a consolidated list of candidates.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The consolidated list of candidates will be issued under the symbol A/66/514.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.36

General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

36th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 19 October 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda items 9 and 14

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/66/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/66/263)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Note by the Secretariat (A/66/160)

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): In connection with agenda item 9, I would like to recall that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2011, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative, programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider item 9 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of chapter I of the report that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

In connection with agenda item 14, members will recall that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly decided to consider under the item the chapters of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including through the participation in its discussions of the President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Miloš Koterec, to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Koterec (Slovakia), Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council: I have the honour to introduce the 2011 report of the Economic and Social Council (A/66/3). Allow me to briefly summarize the highlights of the Council's work this year.

The 2011 annual ministerial review focused on the theme of education, which is closely related to the achievement of the United Nations economic, social and environmental development agenda. Indeed, the first goals set by the United Nations were related to education, arising from three regional conferences organized by UNESCO in the early 1960s. Fostering education at all levels has thus been at the heart of the development agenda from the very beginning.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

11-55468 (E)

Please recycle

At the review, the presence of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and his statement on the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) added a positive and challenging tone to the debate, which benefited from the participation of several heads of United Nations entities and of numerous ministers, other high-level officials, notably Mr. Gordon Brown and Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of Switzerland, and a record number of non-State actors — more than 1,400 — from various non-governmental organizations and businesses.

The segment emphasized the fact that the MDGs represent the minimum global standards for increasing access to education, whereas the "education for all" goals are more focused on improvements in delivery and learning. The segment also underscored the importance of better utilizing education resources to improve outcomes and quality, particularly teaching quality. Participants highlighted the potential of the annual ministerial review's voluntary national presentations in going beyond the MDGs, and stressed the need for the Council to focus on the post-2015 development framework.

Delegations adopted a ministerial declaration that articulates numerous educational challenges and elaborates action-oriented policy measures. Although this was not specifically reflected in the declaration, several speakers — including Mr. Brown, in his keynote address focusing on broken promises, broken dreams and broken trust — expressed strong support for augmenting resources, including by establishing a global fund for education.

Another proposal, by the Swiss President, Ms. Calmy-Rey, was the creation of a United Nations sustainable development council. The coordination segment reviewed the follow-up by the United Nations system to last year's ministerial declaration on gender equality and the empowerment of women and to the conference on Financing for Development. Participants welcomed the role played by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in the provision of technical support and the coordination of actions on gender equality.

The discussions also underlined the need for improved global economic governance, particularly with regard to the role of the United Nations system and the linkages with the Group of 20.

In the operational activities segment, participants voiced their expectations with respect to the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly; reviewed the progress made in strengthening the United Nations Resident Coordinator system, and strategized on ways to strengthen the founding architecture of funds and programmes through the definition of "critical mass" of core resources.

The humanitarian affairs segment demonstrated the Council's capacity to react quickly to topical issues, including South Sudan and the current emergency situation in the Horn of Africa. The segment adopted a resolution that reaffirms the importance of access and humanitarian principles, and references cluster coordination as well as accountability and the need to include acceptance as part of security risk-management strategies.

The resolutions adopted by the Council at its general segment, which carries out an overview of the work of the Economic and Social Council's functional machinery, also attested to the Council's effectiveness in responding to contemporary challenges efficiently. In its resolution on South Sudan, which built on the Council's joint informal event with the Peacebuilding Commission, held on 13 June 2011, the Council decided to continue to monitor the development of that new country and its progress towards achieving the MDGs, in view of its special responsibility to ensure that the United Nations system support to the country is integrated and coordinated.

A significant achievement was the establishment of the new United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, which will bring together for the first time, at the global level, Government experts from all Member States to compile and disseminate best practices and experiences on geospatial information that is highly relevant in the context of sustainable development and humanitarian assistance.

On Haiti, the Council reviewed the report of its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti — a timely undertaking, given the need to maintain a high level of international support for the country while ensuring that political tensions do not hinder the reconstruction and development process.

Looking ahead, my experience as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council has shown me that

the Council has made significant advances since the 2005 World Summit. It has indeed become a quality forum for debate. I would suggest that the major gap remains in its consideration of so-called hard-core economic issues, especially those of money and finance.

We have already set in motion preparations for the next annual ministerial review, which will focus on employment. As we all know, employment and decent work are fundamental to the achievement of the social and environmental development agenda of the United Nations, and ultimately to the sustainability of our planet in the long run. Past years' annual ministerial reviews have demonstrated that no true progress is achievable in any field — including education, gender equality, global public health and sustainable development — without the clear inclusion of employment in an action agenda.

I consider that next year's annual ministerial review will be a crucial element in building our shared knowledge of development imperatives. We must ensure that the recommendations of the previous years' reviews will be carried through. I urge Assembly members to engage fully in the national, regional and global preparatory activities to mobilize action for realization of the development vision of the United Nations.

Ms. Thakur (India): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's full support for the efforts to make the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly a success.

I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council for presenting the report of the Council (A/66/3) and for his encouraging leadership.

We have just heard about the important steps and actions that the Economic and Social Council has taken with regard to the global development agenda. The Council has an acknowledged role as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. It has been singularly successful in promoting the integrated and coordinated implementation of the commitments made at the major United Nations conferences and summits.

Through the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum, the Council has been able to review efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). And the focus of the annual ministerial review on one of those Goals has indeed helped to accelerate action on them.

The Economic and Social Council's annual ministerial review, held in July on the very important theme of "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education", helped us track achievements on MDG 2 and the Dakar Declaration on Education for All in a holistic manner. Overall, the Council session focused on promoting greater coherence between policy and development goals, and on making development partnership more effective, participatory and transparent.

We welcome the Council's oversight role vis-à-vis its commissions and committees, and we appreciate its recent decisions to take corrective action to maintain the sanctity of that global body.

We greatly appreciate the high-level policy dialogue that the Council has been promoting with the international financial and trade institutions on current developments in the world economy. This is of particular relevance in the present uncertain global economic scenario. There is clear recognition that global economic governance needs wider participation on the part of developing countries, especially in the decision-making structures of the Bretton Woods institutions. We are hopeful that the Council will play a proactive role in achieving this objective.

The United Nations conferences and summits held since the 1990s have generated an unprecedented global consensus on the need to pursue sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and development. If prosperity is not shared, there cannot be a just and equitable world. This imperative was emphatically reiterated at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), held in Turkey this year. The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1), though an ambitious document, seeks only a minimal commitment from the global community. If we can give the LDCs a helping hand, they would be more than willing to run to the finish line.

The global economic crisis has not boded well for the MDGs. Accelerated action is needed to neutralize the reverses in poverty alleviation and other development goals. The least-developed countries,

which are the biggest laggards where the MDGs are concerned, need increased external support, including official development assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment and trade.

The linkages between the various United Nations development summits and conferences are strong and their synergies must be tapped. The Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States would derive immense benefits from a comprehensive, ambitious and equitable outcome of the climate change negotiations. Similarly, the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing, through the protection of biodiversity, have an important role to play in poverty eradication.

Multiple United Nations conferences and summits that focused on the attainment of internationally agreed development goals must, therefore, have a seamless, holistic and integrated working relationship with each other. The role of the Economic and Social Council in providing this important interface cannot be overemphasized.

With just four years to go until the MDG target year, follow-up action on all United Nations summits and conferences must be pushed. Global economic uncertainties should not become an excuse for inaction on our development agenda, all the more so as efforts to address the development deficit would give a boost to economic recovery.

A follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development is fundamental to ensuring resources and the policy space that developing countries need to enable them to meet their socio-economic challenges. The 0.7 per cent ODA commitment must be met as soon as possible. Equally important is the need to ensure technology transfer and capacity-building for developing countries. We must give a renewed push to the Doha Development Round. At the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, we must ensure that the opportunity to return the sustainable development agenda to centre stage is fully exploited.

Over the years, the Economic and Social Council has played an important role in advancing a holistic and coordinated approach to global economic and social development, taking into account the interrelatedness of the various goals and targets of major United Nations conferences. We must work to make the Economic and Social Council even more meaningful than what was originally envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations and subsequently strengthened by various resolutions, particularly resolution 61/16.

Ms. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the presentation of the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2011 (A/66/3), the resolutions approved, the description of the high-level meetings and the ministerial declaration adopted. Moreover, the work of its President, Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, and of the Bureau that assisted him, has been commendable. Allow us to make a few brief reflections.

We wish to express our satisfaction to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the programme signed with our country. Special mention must be given to the humanist content of the report entitled "UNDP in Action 2010/2011: People-centred development", by UNDP Administrator Helen Clark.

Among the principle results of the specific UNDP programmes achieved in 2010 are the support for elections and reconstruction after crises and disasters. UNDP has helped more than 50 countries, including ours, to enact legislation, implement policies and create new institutions specifically designed to minimize the impact of natural disasters. Recently, the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund approved the country programme for Honduras for the period 2012 to 2016.

It is no secret that despite the best efforts that have been made, many countries are still far from achieving the much desired Millennium Development Goals by 2015. My own country — with the exception of the targets relating to water supply, sanitation and nutrition — is included in that long list. The Honduran economy has grown at the average rate for Latin America. However, it would seem that we move from one crisis to another; we put out one fire and another flares up.

Sometimes our own domestic mistakes are to blame; other times, it is the negative results of external factors. Yesterday, it was the collapse of global financial systems; today, the collapse of the markets

that buy what little we sell. Tomorrow it will be anxiety, if not fear, because of the warning bells that drive the world's rickety economies to the brink of recession. We take small steps forward one day, followed by recurring episodes of bad news. It is painful not to be able to advance hopes for the immediate future when we are overwhelmed by the present emergency.

Just weeks ago we went to sleep with cautious hopes for a good harvest — and were abruptly awakened by water up to our necks. There was flooding throughout the country, with loss of lives, homes and roads. Infrastructure was damaged and hundreds were injured. Two days of torrential rains were all it took to declare once more a state of emergency. Add those and other recent misfortunes and setbacks to the tremendous accumulated social debt, and it is easy to see why more than half the population still lives in precarious situations.

We have made hardly any significant impact on the high levels of poverty in which more than half the population lives. While, compared to 2001 figures, there are approximately 7.5 per cent fewer Hondurans in extreme poverty, our achievement lies more in the depth of our commitment to what needs to be done than in the momentary relief through what has been achieved.

This is not a complaint or a rationalization asking for pity. It is simply the hard reality. It is a process we are used to: falling, getting up and dusting ourselves off. That is why it is sad that we have to admit that enormous gaps in equality persist. The mountain of problems does not seem to shrink. But that is the size of the challenge that we must face, with quiet determination to keep going.

The Plan for the Nation (2010-2022), adopted by the Government of integration and national reconciliation, is a beacon of hope. It includes reducing poverty and inequality as a priority, creating a national planning system and establishing a decentralized decision-making structure to define, manage and follow up on public policies.

In our fight to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, we must be more forceful in establishing policies for rapid job creation and increasing household incomes. We emphasize that a great many Hondurans who leave their homeland do so out of necessity, because they cannot find work that enables them to live in dignity. As long as the country does not offer ample opportunities, the wave of migration will continue, with the dismal consequences of grief and tragic stories of outrages, rape and vexations suffered by many of our emigrating compatriots, hundreds of whom have paid with their lives, in the corridors of death, for the dream of hope.

We look forward to the assistance of the UNDP Office in the national effort to reach the goals of the Plan for the Nation. It will help in gathering information, designing assessment and follow-up mechanisms, helping local mechanisms in public policy coherence and generating statistical data that will be helpful in designing inclusive social policies.

Recent international studies estimate that Honduras will suffer an increase in temperature, with resulting negative effects on agricultural activity and production in the countryside. A large part of our population is rural, with a subsistence economy. Research on agricultural vulnerability due to climate change is one of the tools being used to propose, with reliable data, risk management options that will lead to mitigation solutions.

While the work ahead of us is challenging, it would be unfair to deny the progress that has been made in the areas of democratic governance, national reconciliation, human rights, citizen security and the strengthening of the rule of law. We will continue to support reforms to eliminate barriers to women's participation in politics, in the economy and in the major role that is theirs in society, within the framework of our gender equality and equity plan.

We will continue technical cooperation with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to promote political and electoral reforms that ensure transparency and efficiency in electoral processes, which are considered essential components for strengthening the Honduran democratic system.

Our commitment must be unwavering. We must not leave a heavy debt of obligations that we could resolve now for future generations to pay. Our will to bequeath a world of more dignified lives for our children and their children must be unshakeable, as must be too our desire to live and coexist in peace as brothers — which is what all the peoples of the world are.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council for presenting the Council's report (A/66/3). I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretariat for supporting the Council's work this year.

Russia attaches great importance to the work of the Council because it is the main coordinating body of the United Nations development system — a unique mechanism to harmonize the interests of different countries and a very important international forum in which to develop basic principles and thrusts of global economic, social and humanitarian cooperation.

We welcome the adoption of the multi-year programme of work for the annual ministerial reviews, in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2012, Russia intends to put forward its national voluntary presentation on the reviews theme "Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals".

We commend the outcome of the Economic and Social Council session this year. The intense and effective work of the Council during its high-level segment strengthened the position of education among the priority issues on the United Nations social and economic agenda. It also gave powerful additional impetus to the coordinated work of the United Nations system in the area of education.

The segment's ministerial declaration set out the political context for further efforts at all levels, particularly in such key areas as increasing the quality of and expanding access to education; preparing and training qualified teachers and improving their working conditions; attracting and effectively using financial resources for education; and improving the system of vocational training to ensure progressive, comprehensive and fair economic growth based on full employment.

We note the Council's contribution to implementing the decisions reached at the 2009 United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. In that regard, the Council reached an agreement on the basic principles to underpin the future work of the General Assembly by setting up a new advisory body to draft independent recommendations, including on the issue of international cooperation in the financial and economic spheres and the reform of the global economic regulatory system.

In 2011, the Council confirmed its key role in the process of intergovernmental follow-up to the various international conferences on financing for development. We welcome the outcome of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We also welcome the efforts of the President and Bureau of the Council to establish working contacts, in particular with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

One of the Council's future priorities should be to expand mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and international financial and trade institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations so as to effectively implement the international development agenda.

The Russian Federation has consistently favoured strengthening the coordinating role of the Council as part of the United Nations system. In that regard, it is important to focus efforts on ensuring coherence between the work of the governing bodies of the United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies, and the overall efforts of the Council in the context of follow-up activities to the recommendations of the key social and economic bodies of the Organization. We call for capacity-building within the Council so that it is able to scrutinize the effectiveness of the specialized inter-agency bodies and the coordinating mechanisms of the Secretariat, including the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). It is important to set up effective mechanisms enabling Member States to periodically assess the work of the CEB from a policy point of view, adjust its priorities and set additional challenges for the Board so as to ensure the comprehensive and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

The Russian delegation has actively participated in the review of the implementation of resolution 61/16 on strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. The report on the topic submitted by the President of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly (see

A/65/866, annex) contains a range of useful recommendations that should be duly considered in the future work of the Council and the General Assembly.

In our opinion, one of the priorities of the review was to clarify the mandates of the separate segments of the Council's substantive session, in particular the coordination segment. Unfortunately, this and a range of other questions, including the possibility of optimizing the agenda and programme of work of the Council's substantive session, were hardly touched upon during the review. We deem it necessary to continue work in this area during the 2012 substantive session of the Council, bearing in mind the relevant conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General.

The Russian delegation is prepared to cooperate constructively with all partners in order to ensure the future strengthening of the Council, including considering the role of the United Nations in global economic governance.

Mr. Zdorov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank the leadership of the Economic and Social Council for presenting the report on the work of the Council (A/66/3). Belarus commends the work of the Council in the reporting period and recognizes the skilful leadership of the Ambassador of Zambia, Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe.

We believe that the Council was able to increase the practical significance of its high-level segment for the functioning of the United Nations system. We also welcome the choice of themes for discussion during that segment. In that regard, we would like to draw attention to the excellent quality of preparations for the Council's substantive session of 2011, during which Belarus presented its national report on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education.

We are convinced that discussing the national voluntary presentations on the achievement of the targets set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a unique mechanism for mutual accountability and feedback. We therefore welcome this practice and are in favour of its continuation.

Belarus gained positive experience in implementing its education policy, which, in the opinion of the Council's President, could be used in other countries. We note, in particular, the value of further integrating Belarus' education strategies into the international education system.

We are in favour of strengthening the coordinating role of the Council in efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015 and in further steps after 2015. We believe that these issues should be discussed as part of the annual ministerial reviews and the Development Cooperation Forum. One of the topics for the Council's 2013 annual ministerial review could be the preparation of the MDG agenda for the decade after 2015. It is crucially important that the international community step up efforts to achieve the MDGs on the basis of the principles of global partnership, including by implementing their development commitments.

We would like to draw attention to the need to establish a new energy architecture that will provide access to energy services and allow States to exchange modern energy technologies. This is also an important factor in achieving the MDGs.

We also believe that the impact of climate change must be taken into consideration in long-term strategies on financing for development and building a green economy.

We urge the Council to continue strengthening its coordinating role in the search for new and innovative development financing mechanisms and help developing and middle-income countries to integrate into the international economic and trade systems. We note, however, that the use of innovative approaches should not replace traditional forms of financing.

Belarus supports the practice of periodic reviews of operational activities for development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. In that regard, we welcome the forthcoming discussion in 2012 by the United Nations operational funds on their strategies to improve support to the least developed and middle-income countries.

Regarding the high-level meetings of the Council with the participation of the leaders of the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization, we believe that the practice of holding such meetings has proven successful and should be continued. At the same time, we suggest considering optimizing the agenda of the joint meetings so as to make them more productive. Belarus is also in favour of increasing the role of developing

and middle-income countries in the decision-making process of the governing bodies of the Bretton Woods institutions.

The main responsibility for ensuring that decisions adopted at the various United Nations conferences and summits are implemented lies with Member States and the specialized agencies of the United Nations. To successfully monitor the implementation of these decisions, it is particularly important to establish closer cooperation among the governing bodies of the United Nations system, including with the help of the Economic and Social Council.

Today, when the world is contending with serious economic difficulties, the work of the Council should focus with special intensity on solving Member States' urgent problems. Belarus intends to make its contribution to this task, including as a member of the Economic and Social Council if Member States support our country in the elections to this important United Nations entity.

Mr. Iziraren (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is happy to participate in today's meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2011 (A/66/3). I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe, President of the Council, for the remarkable work he has done at its head. Today's discussion is testament to the synergy that should characterize relations between the Assembly and the Council, with the aim of promoting international economic and social cooperation on a harmonious and effective basis.

Through its activities, the Economic and Social Council makes a significant contribution to stimulating the debate on international cooperation so as to identify the best approaches and policies to advance and implement the United Nations development agenda. The report submitted to the Assembly and the various activities it discusses testify to the dynamism shown by the Council in its efforts to speed up progress towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals.

While the Council's role in following up the outcomes of high-level conferences and meetings on social and economic development continues to be consolidated, more needs to be done to enable it to fully play its role as the main review and coordinating body of the United Nations for economic and social activities.

The annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum — new functions assigned to the Council at the 2005 World Summit — have become important gatherings for assessing progress made in achieving internationally agreed development goals, as well as those relating to international cooperation, in order to promote the necessary consensus among Members on how best to improve them.

Solving development problems today demands the participation of all actors — public, private, national, regional and international. The involvement in the Council's activities by representatives of civil society, the private sector and the academic and scientific worlds, and by United Nations institutions and other international organizations working alongside States, can only enhance its role as the chief international body entrusted with reviewing international cooperation in the areas of economic and social development.

The conjunction of every kind of crisis — financial, economic and food — and the exacerbations of climate change have begun to call into question some development gains. The countries most affected by these crises remain, notably, African and least-developed countries (LDCs), thereby presenting the international community with the moral obligation to strengthen its cooperation with those countries in order to help them achieve their development goals and overcome structural obstacles to their development.

In that regard, Morocco welcomes the fact that the Council decided to include in its annual ministerial review for 2015 the issue of follow-up to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, and that the Development Cooperation Forum will also address this issue when it reviews trends in international cooperation on development, as well as consistency in development policies.

Although the various crises that have arisen in recent years have posed major challenges to development and have tested international cooperation and multilateralism, they have also encouraged the international community to engage in constructive debate on global economic governance. The Economic and Social Council, which has been at the heart of that

debate, can in fact bring coherence and effectiveness to the process of making decisions with regard to global economic governance and to the implementation of those decisions.

Strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council in global economic governance first entails consolidating its work in coordinating with the other international institutions and forums involved in that governance, in order to ensure the consistency of decisions and actions taken to promote development.

Morocco, which pays special attention to the work of the Economic and Social Council, has always played a constructive role in that work and has supported the Council's efforts to achieve harmonious social and economic global development. As an expression of the priority accorded to its people's sustainable economic and social development, Morocco has, within the framework of the dynamic reforms instituted by His Majesty the King, moved forward with the creation of the National Economic, Social and Environmental Council as a constitutional body. His Majesty, who has always ensured that the consolidation of Morocco's democratic gains has proceeded alongside and in line with the sustainable human development of its people, emphasized at the establishment of the National Council that its task was to be an institution for good governance in development.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Morocco's willingness to continue to contribute constructively to the work of the Economic and Social Council, and to call on members to help strengthen the Council's role in global economic governance so as to better serve the cause of development.

Mr. Almeida (Brazil): The joint debate on the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/66/3) and the integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields constitutes an important opportunity to review the work undertaken during the past year and to prepare for the forthcoming discussions in General Assembly and beyond. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the leadership and dedication of the President of the Council, Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, particularly during the Council's substantive session in July.

My delegation would also like to commend Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz, appointed by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session to facilitate the review of the implementation of resolution 61/16, which established the main elements of the current structure of the substantive session of the Council: the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) and the annual ministerial review, among other innovations.

As the principal body under the Charter for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, including sustainable development, the Economic and Social Council plays a crucial role in the United Nations system. While we recognize that important initiatives have been undertaken over the past few years to improve the Council's inter-institutional and intergovernmental coordination, Brazil believes it is important to further strengthen the Council so that it can fully contribute to international policy discussions and deliberations on substantive issues relating to development. We believe that the report transmitted by the President of the Assembly in document A/65/866 offers a good basis for the review of the work of the Economic and Social Council to be conducted during the Assembly's sixty-seventh session.

The Council's current structure has its merits. The annual ministerial review has become an increasingly important event on the international agenda, capable of mobilizing ministers, high-level officials and special representatives from developing and developed countries alike to address key issues on the development agenda. It allows Member States to review progress on specific policy questions relevant to the international community, with a view to making concrete recommendations that can be acted on by national Governments. It rests on strong foundations and can count on solid achievements as it expands its work.

The Development Cooperation Forum is also an important venue for policy discussion and exchange of views on development cooperation. In order for the Forum to fulfil its potential, however, it needs to be further strengthened. In particular, we consider that the DCF should meet annually, instead of biennially as is currently mandated. Furthermore, we believe that the Forum's deliberations should be reflected in a negotiated outcome, not simply a Chair's summary.

We are convinced that the DCF can evolve into becoming the main forum for development

cooperation, addressing, in a comprehensive manner, issues such as official development assistance, South-South cooperation, philanthropy and new and emerging donors.

The intergovernmental follow-up mechanism to the financing for development process remains a key outstanding issue on the international agenda. While the multifaceted mechanism adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2009 was a step in the right direction, it falls short of what is needed to ensure the proper consideration of the financing for development agenda in the Economic and Social Council. As we have mentioned previously, we strongly favour the establishment of a functional commission on financing for development to follow up on the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development. In that regard, we believe that the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in 2013 should consider, as a matter of priority, the institutional framework for Financing for Development with a view to redressing the current shortcomings.

On behalf of the Brazilian Government, I would like to take this opportunity to invite Member States to join us, at the highest level, for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development next June. In 1992, we adopted a landmark agreement in Rio de Janeiro, committing the international community to a consensus on sustainable development. In 2002, we decided on the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to speed up delivery on those commitments. Next year, we must renew our joint determination and reaffirm our common commitment, while taking concrete steps to achieve sustainable development.

The Conference and its preparatory process will objectively assess the progress achieved so far and identify the gaps in implementation. We must address the new and emerging issues and establish solid foundations for cooperation for the future. Two issues highlighted by the General Assembly are a green economy, in the context of sustainable development, and poverty eradication, as well as the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The Conference will also take up other proposals to be put forth that might contribute to reinvigorating implementation, such as the adoption of sustainable development goals. As the host country and future Conference President, Brazil is committed to working with all Member States and all interested stakeholders to ensure that the Conference delivers on the growing expectations.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in joining my voice to those of previous speakers to discharge the pleasant duty of conveying my sincere congratulations to our colleague and friend Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, President of the Economic and Social Council, for the quality of his report (A/66/3). The document under consideration provides useful information on the importance of the Council's current activities, on the various decisions adopted and on some of the recommendations contained therein.

The emergence of a better, more peaceful and more prosperous world, free of all extreme forms of violence, will occur only with the ongoing promotion of sustained and inclusive economic and social development. In that regard, the Economic and Social Council, given its prerogatives, is certainly a key link in the United Nations system. The importance of the role entrusted to it within that context explains my country's great interest in the work of that renowned organ. That interest is particularly demonstrated by our active participation in the various activities of the Council.

By way of example, I would cite my country's recent involvement in the 2011 annual ministerial review, which made it possible to assess the efforts made by my country, Senegal, to implement its education policy and the challenges still facing it. Moreover, I take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude for the smooth running of that review and for the facilities granted to our country, both for the drafting of its national report and for its presentation. I also take this opportunity to thank Canada, France and Japan, which kindly agreed to be among the reviewing countries. May they realize, through my words, the gratitude of the Senegalese Government.

I would also like to underscore the benefit of that mechanism. It provides the opportunity not only to assess implementation of the decisions and recommendations made by the Economic and Social Council, but also to measure their impact on the development of States.

My delegation also calls on Member States to breathe new life into the Development Cooperation

Forum. That is another mechanism of the Economic and Social Council, which meets every two years and seeks to strengthen implementation of the United Nations development agenda.

Participants will agree with me that, despite all such mechanisms and areas of exchange established to improve the coordination activities of the Economic and Social Council, there remain, nonetheless, significant shortcomings. Indeed, it is highly regrettable to note that the Economic and Social Council really plays only a limited role in leading economic and social development activities.

Currently, development strategies that would indeed help to achieve the goal of combating poverty would benefit from being applied by bodies that are effective in economic and social terms. Such acknowledgement has led to a flourishing of ideas that have given rise to widespread resolve to continue and support the reforms already undertaken to further strengthen the powers of the Economic and Social Council and increase its profile.

On that basis, my delegation welcomes the considerable progress already made, in particular, the significant reforms embarked on during the 2005 World Summit, as well as the adoption of resolution 61/16, by which the General Assembly stated its intent to continue those reforms.

With that in mind, my delegation believes that the focus should be placed, as a priority, on strengthening the Council's powers, improving its relations with the other United Nations organs, and clarifying their various mandates. That would certainly enable the Economic and Social Council to fully fulfil its coordinating role, to serve as a credible decision-making body and, in short, to play a truly dynamic role.

In order to increase its effectiveness, the Council would also benefit from being placed at the heart of global economic governance, and, furthermore, given its agenda, it should increase the number of its meetings, both on global issues and on particular topics.

In that regard, participation on the part of the Organization's subsidiary bodies in the annual ministerial review, as well as the Council's greater involvement in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, are also areas, among others, that could be explored. In that context, I would like to propose to the Economic and Social Council the idea of considering a follow-up meeting to the 2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals.

The importance of operational activities within the United Nations system has led to a greater number of institutions and to overlapping development activities, thus creating real coordination difficulties. That is why, in order to ensure a functioning, balanced and coherent system, the links between the Economic and Social Council and the various United Nations funds and programmes should be re-examined.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker on agenda items 9 and 14. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of those two agenda items.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.37

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

37th plenary meeting
Friday, 21 October 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 113

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2011.

The five outgoing non-permanent members are the following: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria. Those five States cannot be re-elected. Their names, therefore, should not appear on the ballot papers.

Apart from the five permanent members, the Security Council will include in the year 2012 the following States: Colombia, Germany, India, Portugal and South Africa. The names of those States, therefore, should also not appear on the ballot papers.

Of the five non-permanent members that will remain in office in the year 2012, two are from Africa and Asia-Pacific, one is from Latin America and the Caribbean and two are from Western Europe and other States. Consequently, pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII), of 17 December 1963, the five non-permanent members should be elected according to the following pattern: three from Africa and Asia-Pacific, one from Eastern Europe and one from Latin America and the Caribbean. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the three States to be elected from Africa and Asia-Pacific, two should be from Africa and one from Asia-Pacific.

I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates — their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled — receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, will be declared elected. If the number of candidates receiving a two-thirds majority is less than the number of members to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining seats, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

Also, consistent with past practice, in case a tie vote should make it necessary to determine the candidate to be elected or that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

11-55830 (E)

Please recycle

Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairpersons of the respective regional groups of the following. For the three vacant seats from among the African and Asian-Pacific States, five candidates have been designated, namely, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo. For the one vacant seat from among the Eastern European States, there are three candidates, namely, Azerbaijan, Hungary and Slovenia. For the one vacant seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, there is one endorsed candidate, namely, Guatemala.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected. Ballot papers marked "A", "B" and "C" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed.

May I ask representatives to write clearly on the ballot papers marked "A", for the African and Asian-Pacific States, the names of the three States for which they wish to vote; on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Eastern European States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote; and on the ballot papers marked "C", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote.

A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if all the names of the Member States on that ballot do not belong to the relevant region. If a ballot paper contains names of Member States that do not belong to that region, the ballot remains valid, but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African and Asian-Pacific States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	193
Required two-thirds majority:	129
Number of votes obtained:	
Morocco	151
Pakistan	129
Togo	119
Mauritania	98
Kyrgyzstan	55
Fiji	1

Group B — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	193
Required two-thirds majority:	129
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	74
Slovenia	67
Hungary	52

Group C — Latin America and the Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	2
Number of members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Guatemala	191

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, the following States were elected members of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning 1 January 2012: Guatemala, Morocco and Pakistan.

The President: There remain two seats to be filled, one from among the Group of African and Asian-Pacific States and one from among the Group of Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to the first restricted ballot.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the three seats allocated to the Group of African and Asian-Pacific States, two should be filled by African States and one by an Asian-Pacific State. As Morocco and Pakistan have already been elected, the remaining seat for the Group of African and Asian-Pacific States should be filled by an African State.

The second round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the African and Asian-Pacific States that were not elected but that obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Togo and Mauritania; and to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but that obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan and Slovenia. That is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "A" and "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the names of the States for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "A" for African and Asian-Pacific States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Mauritania or Togo, as well as if they contain the names of more than one State. Ballot papers marked "B" for Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Azerbaijan or Slovenia, as well as if they contain the names of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.05 p.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African and Asian-Pacific States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	2
Number of members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Togo	119
Mauritania	72
Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	5
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	187
Required two-thirds majority:	125
Number of votes obtained:	
Slovenia	97
Azerbaijan	90

Since no candidate obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there remain two seats to be filled, one from among the Group of African and Asian-Pacific States and one from among the Group of Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to the second restricted ballot.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the three seats allocated to the Group of African and Asian-Pacific States, two should be filled by African States and one by an Asian-Pacific State. As Morocco and Pakistan have already been elected, the remaining seat for the Group of African and Asian-Pacific States should be filled by an African State.

The third round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the African and Asian-Pacific States that were not elected but that obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Togo and Mauritania; and to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but that obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan and Slovenia.

That is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "A" and "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the names of the States for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "A" for African and Asian-Pacific States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Mauritania or Togo, as well as if they contain the names of more than one State. Ballot papers marked "B" for Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Azerbaijan or Slovenia, as well as if they contain the names of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.55 p.m. and resumed at 1.25 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African and Asian-Pacific States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	192
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Togo	131
Mauritania	61

Group B — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	192
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Slovenia	99
Azerbaijan	93

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Togo was elected a member of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning 1 January 2012.

The President: There remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern European States. In accordance with the rules of procedure, we should continue with the series of restricted ballots. However, in view of the late hour, I propose that we postpone further balloting until 3.30 p.m.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.38

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

38th plenary meeting
Friday, 21 October 2011, 3.45 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As Members will recall, at its 37th plenary meeting this morning, after three rounds of balloting, including two rounds of restricted balloting, the Assembly elected Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo as members of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning on 1 January 2012.

There remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to the third restricted ballot.

This fourth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan and Slovenia. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Azerbaijan or Slovenia, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 3.55 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Slovenia	98
Azerbaijan	93

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a first unrestricted

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

11-55898 (E)

Please recycle

ballot. This fifth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

May I remind the Assembly that any member State from among the Eastern European States may be a candidate except outgoing members, those already members of the Security Council, and those just elected. To make this clear, apart from the permanent members of the Security Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be voted for in the present balloting.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	192
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Slovenia	98
Azerbaijan	93
Hungary	1

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a second unrestricted ballot. This sixth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

May I remind the Assembly that any member State from among the Eastern European States may be a candidate except outgoing members, those already members of the Security Council, and those just elected. To make this clear, apart from the permanent members of the Security Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be voted for in the present balloting.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 5.15 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	192
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	96
Slovenia	95
Estonia	1

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a third unrestricted ballot. This seventh round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 5.25 p.m. and resumed at 5.45 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	192
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	100
Slovenia	91
Estonia	1

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a fourth unrestricted ballot. This eighth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 5.50 p.m. and resumed at 6.05 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	190
Required two-thirds majority:	127
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	110
Slovenia	80

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a fifth unrestricted ballot. This ninth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

However, in view of the late hour, balloting will continue on Monday, 24 October, in the morning immediately after the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council.

I call on the representative of Azerbaijan on a point of order.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I wish to inform the Assembly that I have asked the Secretariat to prolong the voting for an additional hour today.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the representative of Azerbaijan that, first, simultaneous interpretation services will end shortly and that, secondly, we have received a request from the delegation of Slovenia to adjourn the meeting. It shall therefore be difficult to continue with the voting, and I suggest that we proceed with the plan to resume voting for the members of the Security Council on Monday, 24 October 2011, following the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would point out that I made my request to the Secretariat a half-hour ago.

(*spoke in English*)

I would therefore ask you, Sir, to make an exception in this case.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We find ourselves confronted with two conflicting requests. Although the time allotted for the voting today ran out at 6 p.m., and despite a request that we adjourn the meeting following the latest round of balloting, we have received another request that the voting be extended.

A decision in this matter is undoubtedly difficult to make. Given the fact that the time allocated to this meeting has elapsed and that simultaneous interpretation services will no longer be available, and also given the importance of this matter, I refer this problem to the members of the General Assembly to decide the best way to proceed.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): As you know, Sir, it is the unwavering practice of my country's delegation to refuse to proceed with our work without simultaneous interpretation services in all of the Organization's official languages.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We did not hear the proposal to continue the meeting without simultaneous interpretation. As we understand it, interpretation services may be continued at the request of the President of the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Although the time allocated to this meeting has elapsed, I suggest we continue our work until we have completed a final round of voting.

It was so decided.

The President: I repeat that, as no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a fifth restricted ballot. This ninth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan and Slovenia. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Azerbaijan or Slovenia, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 6.40 p.m. and resumed at 6.55 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	190
Required two-thirds majority:	127
Number of votes obtained:	

Azerbaijan	113
Slovenia	77

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a sixth restricted ballot. This tenth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

However, in view of the late hour, balloting will continue on Monday, 24 October, in the morning immediately after the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.39

General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

39th plenary meeting
Monday, 24 October 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

Letter dated 30 September 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Monaco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/66/495)

Letter dated 5 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/66/496)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will first proceed to a by-election to elect members of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with rule 140 of the rules of procedure.

In that connection, I would first like to draw the attention of members to documents A/66/495 and A/66/496, which contain letters dated 30 September and 5 October 2011 from the Permanent Representatives of Monaco and the Russian Federation to the United Nations, respectively.

In her letter, the Permanent Representative of Monaco announces, in her capacity as Chair of the Group of Western European and other States, that Belgium will relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council at the end of 2011 for the remainder of its term in favour of the Netherlands, and that Norway will relinquish its seat on the Council at the end of 2011 for the remainder of its term in favour of Switzerland.

In his letter, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation announces, in his capacity as Chair of the Group of Eastern European States, that Hungary will relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council at the end of 2011 for the remainder of its term in favour of Bulgaria.

As a result, three vacancies will occur and new members must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired terms of office of Belgium, Hungary and Norway, commencing on 1 January 2012 and expiring on 31 December 2012, in the case of Belgium, and 31 December 2013 in the cases of Hungary and Norway.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 2847 (XXVI), of 20 December 1971, and taking into account that the vacancies will occur from among the Group of Eastern European States and the Group of Western European and other States, the new members should therefore be elected from those regions.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the candidates who receive the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of the votes by members present and voting will be declared elected. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

11-56028 (E)

Please recycle

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. We shall now proceed accordingly.

I should like to inform members that, as of 1 January 2012, the following States from the Group of Eastern European States and the Group of Western European and other States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Australia, Canada, Finland, Italy, Latvia, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The names of those 10 States should therefore not appear on the ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. In addition, ballot papers will only be distributed to the representatives seated directly behind the country's nameplate.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Allow me to remind members that they are now voting in the by-election for one seat for the Group of Eastern European States and two seats for the Group of Western European and other States. The election of 18 members of the Council will take place immediately following this by-election.

Ballot papers marked with the letters A and B will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote. A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if all the names of the Member States on that ballot do not belong to the relevant region.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Apeyitou (Cyprus), Ms. Reyes (Honduras), Mr. Macchia (Italy), Ms. Mwaura (Kenya), Ms. Šćepanović (Montenegro) and Mrs. Sulimani (Sierra Leone) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	189
Number of invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	187
Abstentions:	11
Number of members voting:	176
Required two-thirds majority:	118
Number of votes obtained:	
Bulgaria	150
Belarus	24
Hungary	2

Group C — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	189
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	8
Number of members voting:	180
Required two-thirds majority:	120
Number of votes obtained:	
Switzerland	161
Netherlands	159
France	13
Germany	9
Turkey	4
Belgium	2
Ireland	2
Spain	2
Malta	1
Norway	1
Sweden	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Switzerland were elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2012 and ending on 31 December 2012, in the case of the Netherlands, and 31 December 2013 in the cases of Bulgaria and Switzerland.

The President: I congratulate Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Switzerland on having been elected members of the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly will next turn to the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social

Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2011.

The 18 outgoing members are: Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, India, Japan, Malta, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Pursuant to rule 146 of the rules of procedure, those countries are eligible for immediate re-election.

Members will recall that Belgium, Hungary and Norway relinquished their seats on the Council, effective 1 January 2012, and that Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Switzerland have just been elected to fill those vacancies.

Consequently, as of 1 January 2012, the following States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Argentina, Australia, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, the Comoros, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Iraq, Italy, Latvia, Malawi, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Slovakia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Zambia. The names of those 36 States should therefore not appear on the ballots.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 2847 (XXVI), of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States that will remain members of the Council after 1 January 2012, the 18 members should be elected as follows: five from African States, three from Asian and Pacific States, one from Eastern European States, four from Latin American and Caribbean States and five from Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

I should like to inform the General Assembly that those candidates — their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled — that receive a two-thirds majority and the greatest number of votes by members present and voting, will be declared elected. Consistent with past practice, in the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

With regard to candidatures of the respective regional groups, the Secretariat has been informed of the following. For the five vacant seats from among the African States, the Group has endorsed five candidates: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Libya and Nigeria. For the three vacant seats from among the Asian and Pacific States, the Group has endorsed three candidates: India, Indonesia and Japan. For the one vacant seat from among the Eastern European States, the Group has endorsed Belarus. For the four vacant seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Group has endorsed four candidates: Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador. For the five vacant seats from among the Western European and other States, the Group has endorsed five candidates: France, Germany, Ireland, Spain and Turkey.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

We shall now begin the voting process. Ballot papers marked A, B, C, D and E will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if none of the names of the Member States on that ballot belongs to the relevant region. If a ballot paper of a region contains names of Member States that do not belong to that region, the ballot remains valid, but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Apeyitou (Cyprus), Ms. Reyes (Honduras), Mr. Macchia (Italy), Ms. Mwaura (Kenya), Ms. Šćepanović (Montenegro) and Mrs. Sulimani (Sierra Leone) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 12:30 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	193
Required two-thirds majority:	129
Number of votes obtained:	
Burkina Faso	193
Ethiopia	189
Lesotho	189
Nigeria	188
Libya	177

Group B — Asian and Pacific States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	193
Required two-thirds majority:	129
Number of votes obtained:	
Indonesia	191
India	189
Japan	186
Afghanistan	1

Group C — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	3
Number of valid ballots:	190
Abstentions:	18
Number of members voting:	172
Required two-thirds majority:	115
Number of votes obtained:	
Belarus	172

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Dominican Republic	188
El Salvador	187
Brazil	186
Cuba	183

Group E — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	2
Number of members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Spain	182
France	181
Germany	181
Ireland	181
Turkey	179
Belgium	1
Norway	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority of members present and voting, the following 18 States were elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2012: Belarus, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Lesotho, Libya, Nigeria, Spain and Turkey.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113.

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As members will recall, at its 37th and 38th plenary meetings, held on 21 October, following nine rounds of balloting, including five rounds of restricted balloting and three rounds of unrestricted balloting, the General Assembly elected Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo as members of the Security Council for a two-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2012.

There remains one seat to be filled from among the Group of Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to the sixth restricted ballot. In accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, this

tenth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan and Slovenia.

We will now begin the voting process. Ballot papers marked B will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked B, for the Eastern European States, will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Azerbaijan or Slovenia, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.45 p.m. and resumed at 1 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	193
Required two-thirds majority:	129
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	110
Slovenia	83

As the result of this ballot has been inconclusive, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Group of Eastern European States in accordance with the rules of procedure. We shall therefore proceed to a fourth unrestricted ballot — the eleventh round of balloting — in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure. That ballot will take place this afternoon at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.40

General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

40th plenary meeting
Monday, 24 October 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As members will recall, the result of the tenth round of balloting, which took place at the end of this morning's plenary meeting (see A/66/PV.39), was inconclusive. The Assembly must therefore proceed to a fourth unrestricted ballot. This eleventh round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

May I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Eastern European States may be a candidate except outgoing members, those already members of the Security Council, as well as those just elected. To make this clear, in addition to the permanent members of the Security Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be voted for in the present balloting.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. In addition, ballot papers will be given only to the representative seated directly behind the country's nameplate.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 3.25 p.m. and resumed at 3.45 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	192
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	110
Slovenia	82

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a fifth

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

unrestricted ballot. This twelfth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that ballot papers will be given only to the representative seated directly behind the country's nameplate.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 4.05 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	192
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	111
Slovenia	81

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a sixth unrestricted ballot. This thirteenth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that ballot papers will be given only to the representative seated directly behind the country's nameplate.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 4.15 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	111
Slovenia	80

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a seventh restricted ballot. This fourteenth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan and Slovenia. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Azerbaijan or Slovenia, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 4.35 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	110
Slovenia	81

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to an eighth restricted ballot. This fifteenth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan and Slovenia. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Azerbaijan or Slovenia, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.10 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	193
Required two-thirds majority:	129
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	117
Slovenia	76

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a ninth restricted ballot. This sixteenth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan and Slovenia. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that ballot papers will be given only to the representative seated directly behind the country's nameplate.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Azerbaijan or Slovenia, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 5.20 p.m. and resumed at 5.30 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	193
Required two-thirds majority:	129
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	116
Slovenia	77

As no candidate has received the required two-thirds majority in the preceding ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern Europe States. We shall therefore proceed to a seventh unrestricted ballot. This seventeenth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

I give the floor the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): We entered this race for a Security Council seat 11 years ago, and we believe that we are a good candidate and a good fit for today's Council. Our campaign was always for Slovenia and the values we represent. We were never campaigning against any other candidate.

We do not approve of the way this campaign was run, and we do not approve of the way these elections were held. However, the current result speaks for itself and the object of this body's support is obvious. I am therefore withdrawing our candidature. I want to thank all the countries that stayed with us for supporting us.

The President: Taking into account the statement made by the representative of Slovenia, we shall now proceed to the next unrestricted ballot, in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baptista (Angola), Mr. Tegos (Greece), Mrs. Dockendorf (Luxembourg), Mr. Bonifaz (Peru), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 5.40 p.m. and resumed at 5.50 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	193
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	193
Abstentions:	24
Number of members voting:	169
Required two-thirds majority:	113
Number of votes obtained:	
Azerbaijan	155
Slovenia	13
Hungary	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, the following State was elected a member of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning 1 January 2012: Azerbaijan.

The following five States have thus been elected members of the Security Council for a mandate of two years, beginning on 1 January 2012: Azerbaijan, Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo.

I warmly congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Security Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 113.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.41

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

41st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 25 October 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 41

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/114)

Draft resolution (A/66/L.4)

Mr. Limeres (Argentina): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 41, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla.

Last year, the announcements made by the Government of the United States related to a relaxation of certain restrictions on travel and the transfer of remittances had given many of us hope that steps were starting to be taken in the right direction. Nevertheless, one year has since passed and it is clear that those measures have had a very limited effect and that the embargo is still in place.

In fact, the embargo remains largely unchanged and continues to impose severe economic and financial restrictions on Cuba. The embargo has caused, and continues to cause, a high degree of economic and financial damage, which has a negative impact on the well-being of the people of Cuba.

Furthermore, the deepening impact of the ongoing global economic and financial crisis and the continued embargo by the Government of the United States will contribute to further aggravating the hardships of the people of Cuba. Moreover, the embargo frustrates efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and negatively affects regional cooperation in that area.

The Group of 77 and China states once again, as it has on many previous occasions, that the embargo against Cuba contravenes the fundamental norms of international law, international humanitarian law, the United Nations Charter and the rules and principles governing peaceful relations among States. Its continued imposition violates the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of non-intervention and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.

The Group of 77 and China has always been firmly against the embargo. At the second South Summit, held in Doha from 12 to 16 June 2005, heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China firmly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries. They called upon the Government of the United States to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the United Nations Charter

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

11-56249 (E)

Please recycle

and international law — and to the principle of good-neighbourliness — causes huge material loses and economic damage to the people of Cuba.

Today, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate once again its long-standing position on this important matter by quoting the ministerial declaration of the thirty-fifth annual meeting of our Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held here at Headquarters on 23 September:

> "The Ministers firmly reject the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterate the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They emphasize that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment. They therefore called on the international community neither to recognize these measures nor apply them." (*A/66/388, annex, para. 39*)

We recall that last year 187 Member States voted in favour of the draft resolution introduced by Cuba (resolution 65/6). That number represented a large majority of the international community demanding the end to the five-decades-old embargo and to fully adhere to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of a sisterly country.

The Group of 77 and China is committed to working towards a better world for all in which nations, large or small, can coexist peacefully. The achievement of such peaceful coexistence among nations requires adherence by all nations to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the peaceful conduct of relations among nations. The achievement of such peaceful coexistence among nations requires adherence by all nations to the rule of law, including international law.

The Group of 77 and China will again fully support draft resolution A/66/L.4 against the embargo and urges all Member States to do so as well.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, given the long list of speakers inscribed on my list, I should like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on this item now be closed. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to this proposal.

It was so decided.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): I have the pleasure to address the General Assembly today on behalf of the 120 Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would like first to extend our deep condolences to the Government and people of Turkey for the tragic loss of life as a result of the devastating earthquake that struck the eastern part of Turkey two days ago. We extend our condolences also to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the passing away of His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Allow me now to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and to express to him the Movement's full support and solidarity.

It has been 12 months since we last gathered here in the Hall to consider and debate the important agenda item "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". Those 12 extraordinary months have witnessed unexpected and profound changes in many parts of the world, all sparked by an entrenched longing for justice that has been for too long unduly denied. It is the Movement's deep conviction that the application of the principle of justice should not be confined to the national level but should also be extended to the international arena. It should not only govern relations between individuals but also between Member States.

Did the peoples of the United Nations not declare in its Charter's preamble their determination to "establish conditions under which justice ... can be maintained"? It is for that reason that the Non-Aligned Movement finds it utterly troubling that to this day the screws of an unfair and unwarranted blockade, which has been in force for over half a century, are still being tightened against one of the Movement's members, and that unilateral measures and coercive laws are still being adopted and implemented against it.

The Movement unequivocally rejects such blatant violations of multilateralism, which run counter to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms

of international law, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, good neighbourliness and mutual trust — and the Movement calls for their immediate end. We appeal to all States to continue to refrain from recognizing such measures or laws and to support the claim of affected countries to compensation for any damage incurred as a result of this breach of internationally agreed norms of conduct.

The Non-Aligned Movement once again reiterates its call for full respect by all Member States of the crucial principle of justice in international relations. The Movement also reaffirms its steadfast commitment to uphold, preserve and promote all purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, as well as to ensure the continued viability of all the provisions of international law, which together form the core of our multilateral work and inspire our collective efforts to maintain peace and security, achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable development and ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The United States Administration has in the past claimed that it would reach out to the Cuban people and engage with them. Yet those once-encouraging words have regrettably not been translated into concrete actions. The punitive measures imposed against the whole Cuban nation persist, and with them the enduring suffering of its brave people.

The direct and indirect damage caused by the embargo against Cuba are enormous. They affect all crucial sectors of the economy, including those most vital for the well-being of the Cuban people themselves, such as public health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as banking, trade, investment and tourism. It is true that Cuba has made significant progress in many areas, especially in education, health care and gender equality — and we salute the Cubans for what they have achieved so far despite the huge difficulties they encounter — yet we stress once again that the embargo imposed continues to impede socio-economic advances and creates unnecessary economic hardship.

Moreover, this unilateral blockade has an extended negative effect on companies and citizens from third countries, thereby violating their sovereign rights. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its deep concern at the harmful impact on other countries of widening the extra-territorial nature of the embargo, which we consider an added argument in favour of the prompt elimination of those unfounded sanctions.

The Non-Aligned Movement is astounded as to why such an unjust and unfounded embargo is still maintained when 187 Member States of the United Nations voted last year in favour of resolution 65/6, calling for its immediate lifting — the nineteenth such resolution to be adopted by the Assembly on the issue. Why are such punitive measures maintained when evidence indicates that they hinder Cuba's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development? Why should the Cuban people continue to suffer when the international community is almost unanimous in its conviction that the cause of their anguish is unjustified and illegal?

In reality, there are no credible answers to these questions, because the embargo imposed against Cuba is simply politically and economically untenable and, above all, morally indefensible. It is for those reasons that the Non-Aligned Movement once again urges the United States of America to immediately and fully comply with all General Assembly resolutions calling for an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba and, once and for all, to listen to the will of the overwhelming majority of the international community, which will today vote in favour of the of the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the embargo against Cuba.

During his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in Norway in December 2009, President Barack Obama asserted that "Our actions matter, and can bend history in the direction of justice." The President of the United States had also declared a few months earlier, during a trip to Latin America in April 2009, that "the United States seeks a new beginning with Cuba". Today, the Movement once again urges the United Sates to match those words with action by swiftly lifting the unjust embargo it is imposing against Cuba, thereby allowing the arc of history to bend towards justice in international relations and enabling the valiant people of Cuba to fully prosper and enjoy their sovereignty, independence and right to self-determination.

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group, which aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of the Non-Aligned Movement. We wish to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno

Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the agenda item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/66/114). Over the years, the General Assembly, while deliberating on this agenda item, has categorically and overwhelmingly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact. Africa shares the views expressed by the international community in its continued opposition to the sanctions and embargo against Cuba.

The General Assembly has also called upon all States, in conformity with their obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law, to refrain from promulgating and applying, as well as to repeal or invalidate, laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects affecting the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation. Repeated calls by the international community to that effect remain unheeded. The sad, tragic and decades-old United States embargo on Cuba, including its extraterritorial aspects, continues to remain in force.

In the report of the Secretary-General of 16 August, the majority of United Nations Members, including from the African continent and various United Nations entities, categorically rejected the imposition of the embargo on Cuba and called for its lifting.

Given their proximity, Cuba and the United States of America should be natural partners in trade, commerce and investment. Given the large number of Americans of Cuban extraction, Cuba and the United States should also enjoy warm and fraternal relations in social and cultural affairs between their populations. The potential for those economic, commercial and cultural ties between the two nations has, however, sadly remained unrealized.

Whatever the historical roots of this intergenerational embargo imposed on Cuba, surely the time has come when, in a globalized, interdependent world, nations ought to find the courage, the foresight and the sense of global citizenry and leadership that would help to drive the resolve to overcome differences and nurture coexistence in a manner that speaks to the high global ideals of the international community in the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Africa's opposition to unilateral measures that impinge on the sovereignty of another country, including attempts to extend the application of a country's laws extraterritorially to other sovereign nations. The heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), at their meeting in July in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, reiterated the AU Summit's earlier call on the Government of the United States of America to lift the long-standing and unjustifiable economic and trade embargo imposed on Cuba, and thereby enable it to enjoy all the legitimate prospects for its sustained development.

Once again, Africa calls for the complete and unequivocal lifting of sanctions and the embargo against Cuba.

Mrs. Coye-Felson (Belize): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which also aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Non-Aligned Movement.

CARICOM member States continue to reiterate their unequivocal opposition to the United States' imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, an embargo that the overwhelming majority of the international community has consistently opposed for the past 19 years. The unilateral imposition of extraterritorial laws on third States is contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter, and the embargo itself runs counter to the principles that the United Nations and all Member States have traditionally championed: the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade.

The stubborn persistence of the embargo is apparently impervious to the sustained chorus of international criticism and to the logic of a world that has changed immeasurably over the five decades since the imposition of the blockade. The embargo has now outlived the cold war by 20 years. It has outlasted the terms of eight Presidents of the United States of America and even that of Cuban President Fidel Castro. More than 70 per cent of Cubans alive today were born under the embargo. CARICOM considers the embargo an anachronism that has succeeded only in

contributing to the suffering of generations of ordinary Cubans and in unnecessarily increasing tensions between the United States and Cuba. It serves no justifiable legal, political or moral purpose in the twenty-first century.

The punitive embargo is of particular concern to CARICOM, which shares a history, culture, solidarity and kinship with the people of Cuba. Cuba is the most populous State of the Caribbean region and an integral part of the pan-Caribbean process. Caribbean ties with Cuba have historical significance, cemented by years of active cooperation at various levels. CARICOM member States continue to maintain close relations with Cuba through a wide range of programmes of cooperation in areas including trade, health care, infrastructure and human resource development. In many ways, our future regional development is reliant upon our collective advancement and progress. In that context, the embargo is not just a punitive act against Cuba, but an impediment to our shared regional development in the wider Caribbean.

This year's report of the Secretary-General (A/66/114) on the implementation of the resolution on this issue, like previous reports on this matter, outlines responses from the vast majority of Member States, which share a common perspective on the continued unilateral embargo against Cuba. Indeed, the report makes clear that the embargo even affects the manner in which organs and agencies of the United Nations system carry out their work in Cuba.

CARICOM member States therefore, in reaffirming the positions of the Group of 77 and China as well as the Non-Aligned Movement, maintain that constructive engagement and peaceful negotiations are the only acceptable means of advancing long-term peace and stability.

There is probably no single issue upon which the United Nations has made such sustained, strong and unambiguous pronouncements as with the resolutions condemning the embargo against Cuba. Yet the embargo continues, in the face of overwhelming international reproach. The continued disregard of these resolutions represents a blot on the credibility and efficacy of the United Nations. CARICOM member States thus reiterate the view that additional mechanisms could be explored to operationalize the words of the resolution and facilitate the process that will end this continued indifference to the will of the international community.

The significance of the embargo for the Cuban economy continues to be of great concern to CARICOM, and the humanitarian impact on the people of Cuba, especially in the area of health care and food, is especially saddening. The inability of Cuba to acquire necessary medical equipment, spare parts and latest-generation medications, because of the embargo, continues to affect the health-care system, where treatment remains free of charge to the Cuban people. With the strengthening and more frequent storms and hurricanes wrought by climate change, and Cuba's geographic susceptibility to such natural disasters, the humanitarian impact of the embargo becomes even more acute.

Additionally, construction materials and heavy equipment are becoming increasingly inaccessible to Cuba because of stringent rules of origin and restrictions against corporations based outside of the United States. The negative effects on the Cuban economy and its growth are tangible. The embargo has now cost Cuba over $100 billion since its 1962 imposition. In the wake of the ongoing global economic meltdown, the unilateral measures against the Cuban people are now even more harsh and indefensible.

It is remarkable that, even as Cuba struggles with a recent unfortunate string of natural disasters and the continuing impacts of the global economic crisis, it continues to assist other nations in the developing world, starting with its immediate Caribbean neighbours. Thousands of Caribbean students have attended Cuban universities without charge; thousands more have received free surgeries and medical assistance in Cuba; and thousands have been treated in their home countries by Cuban doctors and nurses. We have benefited from technical expertise, capacity-building programmes and infrastructural assistance, and from the selfless generosity of the Cuban people. The people of Cuba have threatened no one, and neither the embargo nor its deleterious side-effects has prevented them from continually extending a hand of friendship and solidarity, even across ideological divides. On behalf of CARICOM member States, we also take this opportunity to thank the people of Cuba for their tremendous and selfless assistance in the wake of last year's devastating earthquake in Haiti.

Given Cuba's peaceful, generous and cooperative international stance, CARICOM reiterates its support for the right of the Cuban people to self-determination, in a manner beneficial to their social and economic development.

CARICOM member States continue to enjoy friendly relations with both Cuba and the United States. Those two neighbours — a mere 90 miles apart — have produced great scholars, scientists and global leaders. The two countries possess proud and noble histories, and are populated by friendly, open and loving peoples. As such, in spite of a long history of dashed hopes, CARICOM remains guardedly optimistic that a new beginning is possible in the relationship between the Governments of Cuba and the United States. However, we consider the lifting of the embargo to be a prerequisite for any meaningful rapprochement between the two countries, not a negotiated end-result. While there have been some recent positive indications of flexibility, there have also been reminders of unilateral rigidity.

We remain hopeful that the United States' recent recommitment to multilateralism will result an in increased willingness to consider the opinions and concerns of its global friends and partners. On this issue, global opinion could hardly be conveyed in a more convincing or consistent manner. As such, our faith in the recent pronouncements of the United States Government carries with it an expectation that these few remaining historical and unilateral wrongs will be righted expeditiously.

It is within this context that CARICOM member States unstintingly support draft resolution A/66/L.4 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America against Cuba.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): I have the pleasure of delivering the following statement on behalf of the members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in my country's capacity as Chair of the OIC Group.

At the outset, I should like to express to Turkey our sympathy and deepest condolences in connection with the devastating earthquake that struck the country last Sunday, causing a number of deaths and widespread damage.

Let me also convey our shared sorrow to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in connection with the demise of His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Aviation.

I should like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/66/114).

As all are aware, although the United Nations, various international forums and non-governmental organizations have for a long time tirelessly and repeatedly expressed the rejection by the international community of the unilateral sanctions, this issue remains a critical one on the United Nations agenda.

Bearing that in mind, I should like to address this issue once again on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group in New York.

OIC activities are guided by the principles of international law, and we support the right of every nation to follow its own unique way of development. In this regard, the OIC group condemns any unilateral acts that affect the sovereignty and interests of another State and its people. We do not agree with any external regulations that infringe on, impede or retard the development of any country, including in the economic, commercial and financial spheres.

The OIC wishes to emphasize that the imposition of arbitrary, unilateral laws contradicts the regulations and directions of the World Trade Organization, which prohibit the adoption of measures likely to hinder free international trade and shipping so as to allow the widest possible partnership between the two sides.

Finally, the OIC, like the overwhelming majority of the international community, calls for lifting the embargo on Cuba in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the appropriate General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the delegation of Uruguay to speak on behalf of the MERCOSUR States: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay; the acceding State the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

I would like to welcome among us the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

MERCOSUR was founded on the principles of solidarity, interdependence and good-neighbourliness. We believe that tolerance is the basis that has enabled the historic convergence on our continent of peoples from all corners of the world. We are linked to our Latin American neighbours by the desire to live in peace and to promote mutual understanding, to defend the independence, the equality and sovereignty of States, and to promote respect for international law. Those ideals, which have historically guided relations among the Latin American States and societies, are enshrined in the charter of the Organization of American States.

We regret that the blockade policy against Cuba remains unchanged. We have even seen increased restrictions on Cuba's financial transactions with third countries. We regret that conditionalities once again obstruct the path towards a greater openness to direct dialogue.

The measures announced last year by the American Government with respect to easing restrictions on travel and remittances, among other things, were positively received in this forum, because they were headed in the right direction. Those measures, however, have not brought with them a substantial change in the blockade policy; they are insufficient and have a limited scope.

MERCOSUR and its associated States understand that the embargo against Cuba is contrary to the principles of the United Nations Charter and contravenes the rules of international law, in particular the equality of States, non-intervention in domestic affairs, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the norms of the multilateral trade system, which link the members of the World Trade Organization.

This embargo, which is contrary to the principle of justice and human rights, represents collective punishment that produces shortages and suffering for the population, limits and delays development and seriously harms the Cuban economy.

The MERCOSUR States parties and associated States reject unilateral and extraterritorial measures as a matter of principle. We condemn the application of coercive unilateral measures that are contrary to free trade, cause irremediable damage to people's welfare and obstruct the processes of regional integration.

Reaffirming once more our unwavering support for draft resolution A/66/L.4, MERCOSUR and its associated States reiterate our commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes and as an effective path in the promotion of international cooperation and understanding among peoples. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba is an example of obsolete policies that have no place today. By adopting this draft resolution, the Assembly will provide further proof of its unwavering political will in defence of the ideals of freedom, solidarity and respect for sovereignty and international law.

Mr. Ahamed (India): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to address the General Assembly.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We meet yet again to deliberate on the agenda item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba". For all these years, the Assembly has repeatedly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other kinds of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of people the world over.

The Assembly has also called upon States to respect their obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law, and to repeal and invalidate laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects on other States. It is unfortunate that, in spite of the General Assembly's yearly rejection of the United States embargo against Cuba, the embargo remains in full force. We see such enforcement as a violation of world opinion and as an act that severely undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations itself.

The more than half-century-old United States embargo on Cuba has brought immense suffering to the Cuban people. It has severely undermined the progress and development of the country. The embargo, which

likely has no parallel in history, is a transgression of the right of a sovereign State to development and to enjoy freedom of trade, economy and navigation.

On the one hand, we, the global community, make tall promises with respect to the Millennium Development Goals and on striving for human dignity and achieving equitable growth, but when it comes to actions, we do the exact opposite of what we promise. The embargo has denied a life of dignity and basic standards of living to the people of Cuba. Actions must speak louder than words.

The embargo, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, has adversely affected the economic prosperity of the Cuban people. The global economic slowdown, along with spiralling food and energy prices, has made matters worse. The embargo has denied Cuba access to United States markets, investment, technology and financial services, and to scientific, educational, cultural and sporting institutions. Cuba has had to pay enormous extra costs for sourcing products, technology and services from third countries located thousands of kilometres away.

The extraterritorial application of the United States embargo has discouraged investment, technology transfer and commercial and other forms of business collaborations between Cuba and third countries. The prohibition of technology and related scientific support, particularly through the extraterritorial application of the embargo, has severely impacted health care, a fundamental part of the commitments contained in the Millennium Development Goals, in Cuba. It has also undermined Cuba's ability to provide health assistance to developing countries as part of South-South cooperation.

The report of the Secretary General on the agenda item under consideration (A/66/114) illustrates the detrimental impact that the embargo has had on international efforts to undertake socio-economic progress in Cuba. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Havana has noted the high cost and negative impact of the embargo on the humanitarian and development cooperation implemented by the United Nations system in Cuba.

There is a huge potential for strengthening economic and commercial ties between Cuba and the United States. Taking advantage of limited openings under the United States Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, the United States has become the largest exporter of agricultural products to Cuba. Congressional efforts in the United States to relax or lift the embargo lend further credence to the annual United Nations resolutions calling for the lifting of the United States embargo against Cuba. People-to-people contacts between the two countries remain severely curtailed.

The steps taken by the United States Administration in January to reduce restrictions on travel and remittances to Cuba are positive developments. However, the United States is far from making a fundamental change in the complex of laws and regulations that form the framework of the embargo against Cuba. Much more needs to be done.

India joins other nations in calling for an immediate end to the United States embargo against Cuba. India supports the draft resolution to be introduced shortly by the representative of Cuba (A/66/L.4).

Mr. Alurralde Tejada (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by stating that Bolivia associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77, and the Southern Common Market.

The Cold War came to an end in 1989, and the fear of a nuclear war that would not only have been the most devastating ever, but would have been the last war ever because it would have led to the end of humankind, vanished. However, now we find ourselves facing other threats, such as climate change, which strike equal fear in our hearts.

However, here at the United Nations we are today discussing a sad aftertaste of the Cold War whose continued existence we still cannot comprehend. On 26 June 1963, President Kennedy addressed the citizens of Berlin in order to tell them that they were living in a fortified island of liberty. That island was defended with all the resources made possible by a blockade, which sought to undermine the city's resistance and was overcome through the establishment of an air bridge organized by the Western Powers. We do not understand how one of the countries that once condemned that blockade with such force today perseveres in maintaining a decades-long blockade against the sisterly Republic of Cuba.

We therefore wish today to refashion the words of President Kennedy for the beloved Cuban people, who are resisting the United States embargo. The emblematic phrase of freedom at that time was "I am a Berliner". We say to the Cuban people that the emblematic phrase for the defence of life in the twentieth century is "I am a Cuban". Only a heroic people determined never to surrender its right to sovereignty and to freely choose its destiny without foreign interference, such as the Cuban people, can serve as inspiration and example to future generations.

I am a Cuban. That is for us, the free peoples of the world, a symbol of pride in our time. Certainly, since the United States imposed its blockade against Cuba, all of us in the Hall, with very few exceptions, is a Cuban. Those who claim that they are defenders of democracy are unaware of the democracy that exists here within the United Nations. How many more times will we have to vote against the blockade for it to be suspended? How many more times will the world have to tell the United States what it thinks of the blockade, with none of our demands being fulfilled? If we truly believe in democracy, then let us start by heeding the will of the countries represented here in the Hall.

For all of those reasons, the Plurinational State of Bolivia thanks the Secretary-General for his report dated 16 August (A/66/114) and fully supports the draft resolution contained in document A/66/L.4.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report on this issue (A/66/114), which once again highlights the international community's broad rejection of the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. For the twentieth consecutive time, the Government of Mexico returns to this forum to repeat its opposition to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and to reiterate its opposition to the use of coercive measures that are in violation of international law, which therefore have no basis in the Charter of the United Nations.

The application of unilateral extraterritorial measures in third countries leads to severe humanitarian consequences that blatantly contradict the objectives that supposedly inspire them. They also represent a rejection of negotiation, diplomacy and dialogue as the appropriate means to resolve disputes between States.

Various organs and entities in the United Nations system have documented the negative impact of the embargo on Cuba's economic and social development, as has the Secretary-General's report. Its damaging effects are evident in Cuba's economic, commercial and financial transactions. It harms sensitive sectors that directly impact the lives of the people and also has negative repercussions on third countries, due to the difficulty of interacting with Cuba in many economic and social activities.

Mexico has therefore supported all initiatives against the embargo and related unilateral measures, both in the General Assembly and in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other forums, such as the Organization of American States, the Latin American Economic System, the Ibero-American Summit and the Rio Group. We shall continue to support the inclusion of Cuba in mechanisms for dialogue and for global economic, commercial and financial exchanges, in line with the will and sovereign decisions of that country, in order to promote cooperation and development.

Our close ties with Cuba and the Cuban people, as well as our own convictions, make us understand the urgent need for the blockade to end. We must not forget that political, economic or military sanctions imposed on States may emanate only from the decisions or recommendations of the Security Council or the General Assembly.

For Mexico, multilateralism remains the best route for resolving disputes and guaranteeing peaceful coexistence among States. In the case before us today, the practically unanimous rejection by the international community proves us right. For that reason, Mexico will, as we have always done, support the draft resolution submitted for our consideration in this session.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela endorses the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Permanent Representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Southern Common Market.

We wish to convey our condolences to the Government of Saudi Arabia on the passing away of Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, as well as

to the Government of Turkey on the earthquake that caused such death and destruction.

We would like to welcome the presence at this meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla.

Member States have issued a nearly universal call in this forum for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo that for more than 50 years has sought to restrict the right of the Cuban people to decide their fate. This is an unequivocal sign that it is necessary to defend the principles of political independence that underlie the Organization. It is shameful that this call has been ignored year after year by those who frequently violate international law.

We reiterate Venezuela's strong rejection of the application of any unilateral measure with extraterritorial effects that violates the rules and principles of international law. We support the various pronouncements made in that regard by numerous forums around the world.

On this occasion, we cannot forget the Cuban citizens Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labatiño, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González Llorét, who are still detained in the United States for defending their homeland from possible terrorist attacks; likewise, René González, who was released but forced to remain in this country under an unjust regime of supervised release. Just as we demand, in the strongest terms, the end of the blockade against Cuba, we also request the release of these four heroes who remain in prison. Their continued detention contrasts with the freedom that confessed terrorists such as Luis Posada Carriles enjoy in the United States. We appeal for René González to be allowed to return to his homeland and to be reunited with his family.

Although the United States Administration has tried to convince international public opinion that it is promoting a change in its policies towards Cuba, the embargo against the island remains intact.

Both the Torricelli and the Helms-Burton Acts, which prevent trade between Cuba and United States companies and their subsidiaries in third countries, continue in force. So too does the threat of sanctions against entrepreneurs who, availing themselves of the free enterprise policy that the United States Government so much defends, decide to invest in Cuba. President Barack Obama has not taken any measures to ease the commercial blockade, some of which do not require congressional authorization for implementation.

The blockade against Cuba is not an abstract device applied against a Government. On the contrary, it has dramatic impacts on the daily lives of women and men, children and elderly, and it represents a massive violation of the human rights of a dignified and sovereign people.

The blockade negatively affects the quality of life of sick people who must do without drugs or access to high-tech equipment whose sale is prohibited on the island by the United States Administration. The blockade is also felt in the obstacles the Cuban people face in enjoying their basic housing rights, since it prevents the importing of building materials necessary for replacing and repairing the huge number of buildings and homes damaged by hurricanes.

Every year the blockade generates losses in the millions of dollars in Cuba's basic industry — in the sugar industry, in iron and steel and machinery, in tourism. All that affects the quality of life of the Cuban people. A conservative estimate of the direct economic damage caused by the embargo, through December 2009, places it at more than $100.154 billion. That figure would increase to $239.533 billion if it were recalculated based on retail price inflation in the United States. In the face of the blockade and its terrible economic and social consequences, Cuba and the heroic Cuban people have moved forward with a generous policy of cooperation with other countries of the South.

The blockade therefore unquestionably represents the repeated and unilateral denial by one signatory to the Charter of the United Nations of the right to development of another State Member and its people, without any hostilities directed at the aggressor State on the part of the State being attacked. In an international environment characterized by ongoing threats to the sovereignty of States is constantly threatened, and where systematic violations of international law threaten brotherly and cooperative relations between peoples, it is more necessary than ever that we demand the end of the shameful blockade of Cuba.

It is time to end double standards in the application of international justice. We cannot allow the vilification of the weak for being so, or any

toleration of violations on the part of the imperialists of the North. These are the demands of the peoples of the world, echoed by the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela. It is time that the universal cry demanding the lifting of the blockade against the heroic Cuban people be heard. Venezuela therefore supports, in the most resolute terms, the adoption of draft resolution A/66/L.4, which affirms the necessity of ending the blockade imposed by the United States of America on Cuba.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Let me begin by welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on this agenda item (A/66/114).

The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For 19 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted by an overwhelming majority resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba, urging all countries to abide by the United Nations Charter and international law and to repeal or invalidate any laws or measures with extraterritorial implications that affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, and their freedom of trade and navigation.

Regrettably, however, those resolutions have not been effectively implemented over the years, and the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States has yet to be lifted. Such practices not only severely violate the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, they have also inflicted enormous economic and financial losses on Cuba. According to figures cited in the Secretary-General's report, by December 2010 the economic losses to Cuba resulting directly from the embargo exceeded $975 billion.

The sanctions and embargo have severely hindered the Cuban people's efforts to eradicate poverty, promote economic and social development and meet the Millennium Development Goals. They have violated the Cuban people's basic human right to food, health and education, as well as their right to survival and development, and have affected normal economic, commercial and financial relations between Cuba and other countries. The international community is currently dealing with multiple serious challenges, such as the financial, food and energy crises and climate change, which make the sanctions and embargo against Cuba all the more unreasonable. The international community's call on the United States Government to change its policy, lift the embargo and normalize bilateral relations with Cuba is growing ever louder.

The Chinese Government has always believed that countries should develop mutual relations on the basis of upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and respect for the right of other countries to independently choose their own social system and development path. China is opposed to any unilateral sanctions against other countries by military, political, economic or other means. Meanwhile, China has strictly observed and implemented the relevant General Assembly resolutions. China and Cuba have maintained normal economic, trade and people-to-people exchanges. Friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in various areas between our two countries has been growing. This is not only in accordance with the desire of both peoples but is also conducive to Cuba's social and economic development.

In today's world, dialogue, exchange and harmonious coexistence represent the mainstream of international relations. Exchanges on an equal footing between countries have become the dominant trend. In the face of differences, dialogue on an equal footing and amicable consultation are the best way of settling disputes. China hopes that the United States will adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and end its embargo against Cuba as soon as possible. China also hopes that relations between the United States and Cuba will continue to improve in order to improve stability in the Latin-American and Caribbean region.

China will once more vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/66/L.4) submitted by Cuba under this agenda item.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): Algeria aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the African Group. I would like to welcome and acknowledge the presence in the Hall of His Excellency Mr. Bruno

Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Algeria would once again like to express its deep concern at the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo unilaterally imposed for half a century now by the United States of America on Cuba. The continuing annual adoption by an overwhelming majority of General Assembly Member States of a similar resolution calling for lifting the embargo against Cuba reflects the profound desire of the international community to put an end to this situation, which has lasted far too long.

In accordance with the principles of its foreign policy, Algeria has always condemned the imposition of unilateral acts, extraterritorial regulations that hinder the development of any country, and all coercive economic and trade measures — such as the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which is openly contrary to international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Every Member State should respect the principles of the Charter, including in particular the sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of any other State.

It is a well-established fact that the embargo affects Cuba's economic growth and impedes its social and human development. In that regard, it is causing huge material losses and economic damage to Cuba, and creating economic hardship, which is exacerbated by the adverse effects of the current global economic and financial crisis, as well as the energy and food crises, which have seriously compromised Cuba's efforts to improve its level of development. That has also affected the food-based safety nets of the Cuban Government, which are instrumental to household food security, as the Secretary-General stated in his report.

According to estimates by the Cuban Government that have been confirmed by the United Nations Development Programme, cumulative direct and indirect losses to the Cuban economy over 50 years have amounted to more than $100 billion.

In accordance with the long-standing position of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue, Algeria rejects the use of economic measures of coercion and the extraterritorial application of laws on developing countries, and urges the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, in compliance with the General Assembly resolutions adopted annually on this issue.

Accordingly, Algeria will support the draft resolution contained in document A/66/L.4, presented by Cuba.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): At the outset, South Africa would like to align itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Argentina, Egypt and Kenya on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States, respectively. My delegation acknowledges the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, at this meeting of the General Assembly.

The question of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba has been, and continues to be, a persistent problem for the United Nations despite the many calls for its elimination. The Assembly's recorded vote results (see resolution 65/6) at its previous session, of 187 in favour and 2 against the embargo is a clear indication that the time has come for it to be lifted. The untold economic and social suffering of the Cuban civilian population, who bear the brunt of this injustice, must end. My delegation views the continued blockade as a flagrant violation of the principle of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention and non-interference in their domestic affairs. Furthermore, the blockade constitutes a violation of international law and its imposition shows disregard for the noble and abiding principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

It is therefore against that backdrop that South Africa has repeatedly joined the majority of countries in expressing opposition to all aspects of the blockade and the unilateral action of the United States of America. South Africa once again reiterates its support for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba.

The situation is further aggravated by the global financial and economic crisis, energy crisis and food crisis, as well as challenges of climate change, which have affected many countries, including Cuba. The embargo directly hinders Cuba's economic recovery and negatively impacts trade, tourism, foreign direct investment and currency transfers. The damage caused

to the Cuban economy is estimated to exceed $975 billion in the future.

South Africa is deeply concerned over the widening of the extra-territorial nature of the embargo and rejects the reinforcement of the measures aimed at its tightening, as well as all other recent measures carried out by the United States of America against the people of Cuba.

My delegation condemns the seizing by the United States, in January, of more than $4.2 million of funding from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which was earmarked for the implementation of cooperation projects with Cuba.

We support the content of the press release dated 18 October by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations concerning the intensification of sanctions and extra-territorial persecution of citizens, institutions and companies in third countries that establish economic, commercial, financial, scientific and technical ties with Cuba. My delegation is strongly opposed to the actions of the United States with regard to fines levied against foreign banking institutions for having conducted operations with Cuba.

The people of South Africa, and Africa in general, have fond memories of the heroic contributions of Cuba to the struggles against colonization, oppression and apartheid. In an attempt to foster trade with Cuba, South Africa is finalizing its proposal to offer a credit line of about $10 million to Cuba. That would be a breakthrough in trade cooperation relations and would reaffirm South Africa's commitment and ongoing support for Cuba.

The international community recognizes Cuba's outstanding work in the areas of health, education and biotechnology in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and the underdeveloped world in particular, and in the world in general. The embargo stifles those outstanding contributions to economic and social development and hinders the betterment of the lives of the poor.

South Africa calls on all Member States to support the lifting of the United States of America's embargo against Cuba and to refrain from recognizing the unilateral measures and laws of a coercive nature that defy the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and norms of international law.

Mr. Le Hoai Trung (Viet Nam): The General Assembly has discussed for 20 consecutive years the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Also for 20 consecutive years, by the end of today's meeting the General Assembly will have overwhelmingly adopted another resolution on this issue of common concern. In that connection, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Argentina and Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively. We have often heard calls for prompt action by the United Nations and States on issues that concern the international community. After 20 consecutive years of the General Assembly's demand against the backdrop of the half-century embargo, it is obvious that ending the embargo is one of those issues.

Viet Nam shares the view of the international community that the United States should end the embargo against Cuba, a sovereign and peace-loving nation, based on the existing strong legal, political, economic and, as is often talked about these days, humanitarian reasons.

As affirmed in the General Assembly's resolutions on the issue, the policies and measures in pursuit of the embargo against Cuba, including the so-called Helms-Burton Act, are contrary to international law and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. They hinder the development of friendly relations among nations. The basis of these policies and measures violates the right of a people to self-determination, which includes, among other things, the right to determine their political system and path of development.

The restrictions on trade, finance and even travel continue to have serious, illegal extraterritorial effects on the sovereignty of other States and their legitimate economic interests relating to persons under their jurisdiction, freedom of trade and navigation and efforts towards the equal and just global economic structure that is necessary for the prosperity of every nation. The Government of Cuba estimates that the loss and damage the embargo has caused the Cuban people amounts to nearly $1 trillion. It is a staggering figure, but the suffering the embargo has caused the Cuban people is greater than the mere number, and is especially profound for women and children.

This has also prompted the Ibero-American heads of State and Government to call for an end to the embargo. In the Final Document of the fifteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Egypt in 2009, the heads of State and Government of the Movement

> "reiterated their call to the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba which, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the United Nations Charter and international law, and to the principle of neighbourliness, is causing huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba."

The discussions we are engaged in and the action that the General Assembly is going to take today are consistent with the desire for cooperation and dialogue that, at the start of this session, permeated the general debate and its theme of the peaceful settlement of disputes. In this regard, we would like to recall the statement made by His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, in the General Assembly just a month ago (see A/66/PV.26), in which he reiterated Cuba's willingness to move towards normalizing relations with the United States, as well as its proposal to begin dialogue aimed at solving bilateral issues, including humanitarian issues, and its offer of cooperation in numerous areas.

For the reasons to which I have referred, Viet Nam will support draft resolution A/66/L.4 under consideration today and strongly urges the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and begin dialogue with that country.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): A half-century ago, the world was witness to the Cuban spring, an indigenous and popular uprising against a corrupt and brutal dictator. The Cuban people, unassisted by foreign military forces, cast off the shackles of rapacious exploitation and chose for themselves a new and uniquely adapted path of progress, global citizenship and development that was measured not by levels of corporate or individual excess but by its fulfilment of the needs of its citizens, particularly the poor.

Alas, some States did not greet the Cuban spring in the spirit of enthusiasm with which they welcomed, assisted or instigated other, subsequent revolutionary movements. For the past five decades, Cuba has been subject to an economic, commercial and financial embargo whose scale and scope have no parallel in the modern world. For the past 20 years, the international community has spoken in an increasingly unified voice against the continued imposition of that blockade. Today, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines unreservedly aligns itself with the positions expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, and the Caribbean Community in again calling for an end to this unjust, immoral and illegal embargo.

By almost any measure, the embargo is an unmitigated failure. It has served only to visit suffering on the Cuban people and as a jingoistic backdrop to a smattering of pandering politicians who value their individual electoral fortunes above integrity, international law and the weight of overwhelming global condemnation.

Today we must ask ourselves: What place does this embargo have in our modern world? And in an interconnected world of open borders and the free movement of people, goods and capital, how can the champions and architects of globalization legislate the isolation of one State, or place extraterritorial restrictions on commerce, global trade and the movement of individuals? How can the electorate of one district, or one constituency, or one country determine the cargo and path of a ship sailing into and out of Cuban waters, or the manner in which banks and corporations of other countries conduct their business with Cuba?

As a developing country heavily dependent on remittances and affected by an international economic meltdown not of our own making, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines finds it inexplicably cruel that any State would seek to limit the amount of money that one family member could bring home to another, or the value of items in a gift parcel, particularly in the midst of this global recession.

Today, there are countries where United States soldiers are heroically fighting and shedding blood in wars, yet United States citizens may travel to those countries, and foreign banks may transact business in them. There are countries whose systems of governance, or whose practices and values, are diametrically opposed to the American way of life. Yet the bonds of trade and mutual respect for sovereignty

supersede those differences, and no embargo exists to impose the ideals of one nation upon another. Only the Cuban embargo remains as the last surviving relic of a Cold War that otherwise exists only in history books and museums. Even if every vicious lie, every unfounded allegation, every spurious and demonstrably false characterization of the Cuban Government were accepted as fact, they would not justify the existence of this embargo in a modern world of interconnection and multilateral engagement.

No country represented here in Hall has the right to tell the United States how to conduct its foreign policy, who its friends should be or how to determine its national interests. Even if such a right existed, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would not presume to exercise it against our cherished friend and neighbour to the north. But every country in the Hall is obligated by the United Nations Charter to oppose instances where national foreign policy decisions morph into violations of international law, or into sustained disregard for the Charter principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States.

Among the complex and interlocking system of laws that perpetuate the Cuban embargo is the United States 1996 Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, which makes the easing or lifting of the embargo conditional on a determination that a transitional or new Government is in power in Cuba. I am unaware of any other instance where the principle of regime change is so nakedly codified into the legislation of another country. The Helms-Burton Act has a stated policy objective of installing a "democratically elected Government" in Cuba, and helpfully supplies a congressional definition of what constitutes a democratically elected Government. According to the definition provided, as it appears in section 206 of the Act, a democratically elected Government is one that

> "has made demonstrable progress in returning to United States citizens (and entities which are 50 per cent or more beneficially owned by United States citizens) property taken by the Cuban Government from such citizens and entities on or after January 1, 1959, or providing full compensation for such property".

That is the definition of the democratically elected Government. Whatever the merits of this definition of democracy, the continued application of the Act stands in marked contrast to the words uttered by our esteemed friend and brother President Barack Obama of the United States in his inaugural address to the General Assembly in its general debate. In that address, President Obama rightly stated that

> "Democracy cannot be imposed on any nation from the outside. Each society must search for its own path, and no path is perfect. Each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its people and in its past traditions. And I admit that America has too often been selective in its promotion of democracy." (*A/64/PV.3, p. 14*)

We in St. Vincent and the Grenadines heartily endorse and support those words, but words without works are meaningless.

The President of the United States has considerable discretion to ease the crippling restrictions imposed on the Cuban people. We respectfully urge him to consider the full extent of his powers in light of his indisputable commitment to multilateralism, his respect for international law and his well-documented efforts to alleviate the suffering of peoples worldwide.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is aware that our small country, small population and small economy, not to mention the waning military significance of the Caribbean region, have allowed our needs and concerns to be overlooked by those who see the world only through the prism of their own narrow and immediate interests. However, Cuba has remained a staunch and abiding partner in the development of our country, even in times of global hardship. Cuban universities have graduated over 250 Vincentian students and are currently playing host to 150 more, free of charge. Cuban surgeons have performed operations on over 3,000 Vincentian patients, without charging them a penny. Cuban doctors have brought quality medical care and expertise to the most remote areas of our country. Even as we speak, Cuban engineers, architects and workers are labouring alongside Vincentians in the construction of a modern hospital and our very first international airport.

While far wealthier nations and institutions have looked askance at our developmental struggles and offered only dubious prescriptions, platitudes and trite clichés, the Cuban people have rolled up their sleeves and given freely of themselves in a manner that has touched the hearts of the Vincentian people. No dollar

amount can adequately reflect the value of their support, solidarity and partnership, for which the Cuban people have asked nothing in return. Our appreciation cannot be overstated.

Allow me, in closing, to return to the stirring words of President Obama's inaugural United Nations address:

> "The world must stand together to demonstrate that international law is not an empty promise ... (*ibid., p. 11*)
>
> "No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation. No world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will succeed ... The traditional divisions between nations of the South and the North make no sense in an interconnected world, nor do alignments of nations rooted in the cleavages of a long-gone Cold War.
>
> "The time has come to realize that the old habits and the old arguments are irrelevant to the challenges faced by our peoples." (*ibid., p. 10*)

Those words embody a promise of change in which we can wholeheartedly believe. Recent events have reminded us that change, like peace, is often hard. But not all aspects of change are hard. Some simply require a modicum of political courage and a willingness to hear not the hackneyed sloganeering of an increasingly narrow and local political interest, but to heed instead the insistent, consistent and overwhelming voice of the international community, friend and foe alike, and indeed, one's own conscience, compassion and common sense.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus is pleased to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, who is participating in today's meeting.

For many decades, the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations have spoken in the General Assembly to demand an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo of Cuba imposed by the United States . It is an uncivilized and unconstructive way to handle international disputes.

We are convinced that the policy of the blockade against freedom-loving Cuba is contrary to international law and violates principles and decisions of the United Nations. The unilateral sanctions have a profoundly negative impact on the living standards of the Cuban people, as well as on that country's economic development, especially given the added damage of the current financial and economic crisis and the likelihood of its second wave.

The Republic of Belarus decisively rejects any application by any State of economic and trade measures against another. We stress the intrinsic right of each nation to choose its own model of development. We consider that any unilateral attempts by a single State to modify the domestic political system of another State through economic, political or other measures is unacceptable.

We are convinced that in the current system of international economic relations there should be no place for economic sanctions or other unilateral coercive measures to put economic pressure on a State or its citizens. It is time to realize that a strong people will never relinquish their right to choose. Determining one's own path to development has a precious value.

Today we are going to adopt the twentieth General Assembly resolution that urges the United States to end its unilateral and obsolete embargo against Cuba. We sincerely hope that, on this twentieth attempt, the voice of the General Assembly will finally be heard.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made earlier by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we enter the twentieth year of debate on this agenda item in the General Assembly, Indonesia would like to reiterate its call for the conclusion of the unilateral economic, commercial, and financial embargo imposed against Cuba. That unilateral embargo undermines not only the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and international law, but also the rights of people to life, well-being and development without distinctions of any kind. Moreover, although unilaterally imposed, the embargo has impacted the economic and commercial interests and relations of third countries.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/66/114), the embargo has severely affected the day-

to-day welfare of Cuban citizens. At a time when the world is facing serious, multifaceted challenges in the economic, food, energy and other development spheres, the embargo poses an unnecessary burden regarding the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals.

Much has changed since the initial imposition of the embargo. Globalization has created the conditions for true global solidarity and partnership in the community of nations. We believe that lifting the embargo would be in keeping with the spirit of the times. In our view, the time is ripe for relations between the two main parties to be transformed through constructive engagement.

As a member of the international community, Indonesia remains steadfast in its opposition to actions that undermine the principles of the United Nations Charter. We call on all countries to adhere to the principles of equality, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, good neighbourliness and respect for human rights.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I would like to begin by associating this statement with the statement issued by Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this agenda item.

This is the twentieth consecutive year that we have gathered in this Hall to urge our friend and partner the United States to lift its blockade against the Cuban people. The voices of 187 Members of the United Nations family last year spoke in lockstep unison on this issue. We are positive that we will do so again this year in connection with the draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/66/L.4).

The theme of last month's general debate was "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes through peaceful means". We ask our friend and partner the United States of America, a Member with absolute power within our multilateral system, to view its actions with regard to the people of Cuba through the lens of humanity, find peace within itself and reach out to its neighbour Cuba and renew a friendship that has been put on ice for the last five decades.

The world is changing, and changing fast. We speak of rights; let us uphold those rights. We speak of freedom; let us respect other States' freedom to adopt their own political system. We speak of the rule of law; let us conduct ourselves in conformity with international law. We speak of multilateralism; let us do away with unilateralism.

Solomon Islands, as a small island developing State, believes in multilateralism; this is all we have. Solomon Islands commends Cuba for taking the most peaceful path in seeking the unconditional lifting of the blockade through the United Nations. This is the only place where the members of the international community, large and small, gather to ensure that what is moral is upheld, what is right is respected and what must be undone is lifted.

Once again, Solomon Islands will vote in support of the draft resolution calling for the unconditional lifting of the blockade, and calls on all members to support it as well.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's debate of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla.

The Russian delegation would like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/66/114) presenting the views of Member States, which have unanimously expressed disagreement with and rejection of the unilateral and extraterritorial economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The position of principle taken by Russia with regard to this draft resolution is well known and remains unchanged. We express total solidarity with the overwhelming majority of the members of the international community, who strongly condemn the trade and economic embargo against Cuba by the United States and call for the earliest repeal of this senseless anti-Cuban practice that runs counter to current international realities.

The anti-Cuba blockade, which has lasted for almost half a century, has clearly demonstrated its inability to influence the sovereign choice of development model made by the Cuban nation. The only consequences of the sanctions have been the deterioration of the living standards of the Cuban population, the creation of artificial barriers to its economic growth, and an infringement of the rights and interests of third countries. Such measures are counterproductive, as they only complicate the quest

for solutions to inter-State disagreements and aggravate an already overloaded and contentious agenda.

For years now, the unilateral, restrictive United States actions against Cuba have had effects that are directly opposite to the outcome sought by the instigators of that policy during the cold war. President Obama's Administration, which raised great and justified hopes regarding the adjustment of the United States policy towards Cuba, has taken only minimal steps in that direction. We hope that the decision of the United States Administration to discontinue certain restrictions on visits by United States citizens to their relatives in Cuba and on the sending of remittances and money orders will be followed by additional steps aimed at normalizing United States-Cuban relations and the final lifting of the embargo.

We strongly believe that this policy, unlike the discriminatory practice of economic strangulation, will contribute to the successful implementation of the progressive social and economic reforms currently being implemented by the Cuban leadership.

Guided by the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations on the inadmissibility of any discriminatory measures relating to or interference into the domestic affairs of States, we deem it necessary to vote in favour of the draft resolution calling for a lifting of the blockade.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/66/L.4.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish at the outset to convey our deepest condolences to our Central American brothers, to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to the Republic of Turkey.

On 13 November 1991, the General Assembly took the decision to include in the agenda of its next session a discussion of the item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

That was when the United States, in a cruelly opportunistic manner, was determined to tighten the siege against the island, which was struggling alone as a result of the so-called Torricelli Act, which cut off our trade in medicines and foodstuffs with the subsidiaries of United States companies based in third countries. That was the official act that made public the extraterritorial implementation of the blockade laws against third States.

At that time, it might have seemed impossible that 20 years later the Assembly would still be discussing the same item, which is so closely linked to the right of peoples to self-determination, to international law, to the norms of international trade and to the very reasons for the Organization's existence.

This is one of the items that is traditionally discussed by the General Assembly and gives rise to the greatest number of reiterated statements. It also receives categorical and overwhelming support, clearly demonstrating the uncomfortable isolation of the aggressor country and the heroic resistance of a people that refuses to give up its sovereign rights.

For two decades, the international community has invariably and consistently called for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba. It has done so by means of the resolutions that are adopted almost unanimously every year, by the dozens of appeals issued by heads of State and delegations that have referred to this item during the high-level general debate of the Assembly, and by the statements made by virtually all international agencies and groups of States, particularly those of Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 1996, the Helms-Burton Act led to an unprecedented expansion of the extraterritorial scope of the blockade and laid the groundwork for a "change of regime" and subsequent direct intervention in Cuba. No one seems to have noticed that the 2004 "Bush plan for Cuba" has been left by the wayside.

The report of the Secretary-General on this item (A/66/114), which includes the statements of more than 160 countries and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, comprehensively illustrates this continuing and cruel policy and on its direct effects on the people and the economy of Cuba. The direct economic damage caused to the Cuban people as a result of the blockade exceeds $975 billion, estimated at the depreciated United States dollar value compared to that of gold.

Article II, subparagraphs (b) and (c), of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines as acts of genocide "causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group" and "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part".

According to a United States Government memorandum of 6 April 1960, the blockade's objectives have been to cause

> "disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship ... to weaken the economic life of Cuba ... denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

The United States has never hidden the fact that its objective is to overthrow the revolutionary Government and to destroy the constitutional order that the Cuban people defend in sovereignty. That is what former President George W. Bush called "regime change", which has now acquired new dimensions.

Despite the false image of flexibility that the current United States Administration tries to portray, the blockade and the sanctions remain intact, fully implemented, and their extraterritorial character has intensified in recent years. The increased persecution of Cuban financial transactions across the world, with complete disregard for the laws of third countries and the opposition of their Governments, has become a distinct feature of the Obama Administration.

Cuba is still unable to freely export or import products and services of any sort to and from the United States. Cuba cannot use American dollars in its transactions, not even to pay its contributions to the United Nations and to other international agencies. Nor can Cuba hold accounts in that currency in banks in third countries or have access to credit from banks in the United States or from any of their subsidiaries in third countries or from international institutions, such as the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank.

The ban on trade with American companies' subsidiaries in third countries still cannot be altered. Entrepreneurs from other countries who are interested in investing in my country continue to be sanctioned, threatened or blacklisted.

International organizations and agencies and programmes of the United Nations system are not spared from this policy. The United States Government hinders the cooperation that those entities offer to Cuba, including that intended for extremely sensitive areas. Clear evidence of that is the confiscation in January of $4,207,000 in financing from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to implement projects of cooperation with Cuba, which was intended for combating the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and tuberculosis.

As a result of Cuba's denunciation, the United States Treasury Department issued a general licence in May this year to release those funds. That licence will expire on 30 June 2015. But the very fact that the resources allocated by that humanitarian organization require a United States Government licence to reach Cuba shows — in addition to the intent to use these sensitive programmes as hostages of that Government's aggressive policy against my country — flagrantly disrespectful behaviour towards the United Nations and its various agencies. Several cooperation projects carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency have also been victims of the blockade.

In the midst of a supposed relaxation that allows some groups of Americans to travel to Cuba, the Treasury Department very recently denied travel permits to two important United States non-governmental organizations that for years have been cooperating with Cuban institutions in the area of health care. That decision could prevent donations of medicines that are unavailable in our country because of the blockade from reaching their destination. The truth is that the freedom of travel of Americans continues to be hampered, and Cuba remains the only forbidden destination.

On several occasions, United States representatives have indicated here that the item we are discussing today is a bilateral issue and therefore should not be discussed in this forum. They are likely to reiterate the same fallacious argument here today. The facts prove the inconsistency. Citizens and companies from numerous Member States represented here have been subject to sanctions for establishing economic relations with Cuba.

What is represented by the fines imposed on 18 August on the subsidiary of the French shipping and transportation company CMA CGM for offering

container services to Cuba, if not the extraterritorial nature of that policy? How could we describe the demands imposed by the European subsidiary of PayPal, which facilitates electronic transactions through the Internet, on the German firm Rum & Company to force it to remove Cuban rum and tobacco from its web page?

There have been countless examples of the extraterritorial implementation of that policy, as can be seen in Cuba's reply contained in the Secretary-General's report.

President Obama's most recent statements about Cuba have left quite a few observers astonished, but they come as no surprise to us. President Obama's response to the Cuban Government's offer of a dialogue on all topics of interest on the bilateral agenda has been, once again, a non-committal refusal, based on absurd arguments and unacceptable conditions that have never worked. His position is old, repetitive and anchored in the past. It is as if, instead the President elected to bring about change, his predecessors were speaking for him, including Republican predecessors. He seemed misinformed, completely unaware of what is going on in our country, of our history and of our culture.

Cuba experienced great change in 1959. At the cost of 20,000 lives, it swept away the dictatorship of Batista, the United States' strongman. Since then, Cuba has continued to change day by day, and thanks to its capacity for renewal it has been able to resist. Others did not resist because they did not change, or because they were inflexible or drifted. Now, Cuba is changing and will resolutely change everything that should be changed within the revolution and within socialism: more revolution and improved socialism. The only thing that has not changed over the past 50 years is the blockade and the hostile and aggressive policy of the United States, despite the fact that it has not worked, nor will it.

However, what the United States Government wants to see changed will not change. The Cuban Government will continue to be the Government of the people, by the people and for the people. Our elections will not be auctions. There will be no $4 billion election campaigns nor a parliament supported by 13 per cent of voters. We will not have corrupt political elites separate from the people. We will continue being a true democracy, not a plutocracy. We will defend the right to true and objective information.

We will continue our fight for full justice. We will protect equal opportunities for every child, and we will not abandon anyone. We will not renounce our social policies. Health and education will continue to be universal and free of charge. We will guarantee the right to work, decent retirement and social security. There will continue to be equal pay for equal work. We will protect pregnant women and the disabled. Human beings will continue to be the first and most important thing. We will defend our culture. We will continue to believe in human values. The exercise of human rights will be fully guaranteed for all Cubans.

The economy will have to be efficient, but it will continue to be in the service of the people. People's lives are, and will continue to be, far more important than macroeconomic data. The people will continue to be consulted on economic policies. The consequences of the global economic crisis will be shared by all. We will continue redistributing wealth so that there are neither rich nor poor. We will not allow corruption or speculation, nor will we steal money from workers to bail out banks. We will continue to seek the participation of foreign companies in our economy without any exceptions.

It would suffice to review the recent disclosures made by Wikileaks about the work of the State Department and American embassies in all countries to hinder political, diplomatic, economic, commercial and cooperative relations with Cuba. They are disgraceful because of their content — the information about the concern, the interest in and persecution of the humanitarian work being carried out by Cuban medical brigades, which nobly and selflessly serve millions of peoples in dozens of sister nations.

Family ties and the limited cultural, academic and scientific exchanges between the United States and Cuba show today what a positive step it would be to expand those links for the benefit of both peoples, without the obstacles and conditions imposed by Washington, D.C. Cuba's proposal for moving towards the normalization of relations and expanding bilateral cooperation in a range of areas still stands. Making reciprocal efforts to resolve pending humanitarian issues would likewise be in our common interest.

Why does President Obama's Administration not better concern itself with the problems of the United

States and leave us Cubans alone to solve ours in peace?

One of the five Cuban antiterrorist fighters has just finished serving every minute of his unjust 13-year prison sentence, yet he is now being prevented from returning to Cuba and reuniting with his family, while the other four continue to endure a cruel and unjust incarceration as political prisoners. The blatant corruption in the legal proceedings and the Government's illegal conduct throughout is widely known and has been well documented. Why not release them as an act of justice, or at least as a humanitarian gesture?

I must convey the profound gratitude of the people of Cuba to all of the countries that for 20 years have used their voices and their votes to call for an end to the most unjust, long-lasting and comprehensive unilateral sanctions in history, which have caused so much harm to millions of Cubans.

I speak on behalf of 16-year-old Guillermo Domínguez Díaz, 18-year-old Ivis Palacio Terry, 17-year-old Randy Barroso Torres, and 12-year-old Adrián Izquierdo Cabrera, who have undergone conservative surgeries and spent months confined to bed, wearing casts, because hospitals have no paediatric expandable prostheses, which are manufactured in the United States or under its patents. I speak on behalf of María Amelia Alonso Valdés, 2 years of age, Damián Hernández Valdés, 4, and Dayán Romayena Lorente, 12, who suffer from central nervous system tumours and who need to be treated with Temodal, a drug manufactured in the United States and protected by its patents. On behalf of my selfless, generous, optimistic and heroic people and for the good of the community of nations and the equilibrium of the world, I ask the Assembly to support draft resolution A/66/L.4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/66/L.4.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Godard (United States of America): For yet another year, the Assembly is taking up a draft resolution designed to confuse and obscure. But let there be no confusion about this: the United States, like most Member States, reaffirms its strong commitment to supporting the right and the heartfelt desire of the Cuban people to freely determine their future. And let there be no obscuring that the Cuban regime has deprived them of that right for more than half a century.

At the same time, the United States strongly asserts its sovereign right, on the same basis as other Member States, to determine its bilateral policies, including its economic relationships with other countries, in accordance with its own national interests and values. This includes our economic relationships with other countries. The United States' economic relationship with Cuba is a bilateral issue and is not appropriately a concern of the Assembly.

The embargo represents just one aspect of United States policy towards Cuba, whose overarching goal is to encourage a more open environment in Cuba and increased respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms — principles to which this Organization is also dedicated.

This annual exercise attempts to no good end to obscure some fundamental truths. The Cuban Government's own policies, not any action of the United States Government, are the greatest obstacle to Cuba's economic development. Those policies concentrate political and economic decisions in the hands of the few, stifling economic growth. They ignore the basic principles, so effectively demonstrated in many countries, that policies that allow individual freedom unleash the creativity of people, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, and are the best means to achieve sustainable economic development.

This exercise conceals the fact that the United States is a leading source of food and humanitarian aid to Cuba. The United States does not restrict humanitarian aid to Cuba. Cubans receive food, medicine, other forms of assistance and remittances from the United States. In the year 2010, the United States Government authorized $3.5 billion in total sales to Cuba of United States goods. In agricultural products alone, the United States exported $361.7 million in goods to Cuba in 2010, including

poultry, soy bean products, corn, wheat, feed products, pork and other items.

Indeed, as the Cuban Government itself has repeatedly indicated, the United States has for years been one of Cuba's principal trading partners. The United States in 2010 also authorized $861 million in private humanitarian assistance in the form of gift parcels filled with food and other basic necessities, as well as non-agricultural and medical donations. Those figures alone are sufficient to rebut the spurious allegations of genocide against the Cuban people contained in previous resolutions recalled in the current draft (A/66/L.4) and to demonstrate that this calumny greatly misuses that important term and insults the true victims of genocide.

This draft resolution and much of the stale rhetoric surrounding it ignores some basic facts. As President Obama made clear last month, the United States is open to a new relationship with Cuba if the Cuban Government starts taking proper steps to open up its country and provide the space and the respect for human rights that would allow the Cuban people to determine their own destiny. The Cuban Government also needs to release unconditionally and immediately the 62-year-old American citizen Alan Gross, whom it sentenced to 15 years of prison for the crime of trying to connect Cuba's Jewish communities to the Internet.

The President in January 2011 implemented several significant changes to United States policy towards Cuba, aimed at increasing people-to-people contact, supporting civil society in Cuba, enhancing the free flow of information to, from and among the Cuban people and helping promote their independence from Cuban authorities. Those changes build upon the President's previous actions in April 2009 and demonstrate the strong commitment of the United States to the Cuban people, contrary to the picture painted in the draft resolution.

The United States looks forward to a still greater broadening of contacts and exchange with Cuba, and is prepared to do its part to that end. However, improving the situation requires efforts on the part of the Cuban Government as well. It must ensure that the Cuban people enjoy the internationally recognized political and economic freedoms to which this body is committed and on which it has insisted with regard to other countries.

Because the draft resolution does not reflect present realities, my delegation will vote against it. We strongly believe that this body, instead of engaging in such meaningless exercises, should dedicate itself to supporting the efforts of the Cuban people to freely determine their own future. Only by that course can this body truly advance the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): For the twentieth year in a row, the General Assembly will deliver its judgement and demand an end to the criminal and inhumane blockade against the heroic, generous people and Government of Cuba. Yet again, we have heard a representative of the United States of America attempt to justify that which cannot be justified in order to force the submission of a people that will never submit, a people whose resolve is absolute — a people, as Commandante Fidel recently remarked, whose will is made of steel.

Nicaragua would like once again to publically express its commitment to and support for the draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/66/L.4), which was introduced by our colleague Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to whom we express our unconditional solidarity and our gratitude for the updated information on the damage and prejudicial harm that the United States of America continues to inflict on the Cuban people with the most criminal blockade in the history of humanity.

Nicaragua expresses its eternal gratitude to the Cuban people and Government for their unwavering and unconditional militant solidarity whose primary goal is to help countries in development. We also wish to thank Commandante Fidel Castro, who joined forces with Commandante Chávez to undertake a great project of solidarity, reciprocity, social justice, fair trade, life and peace in our Latin America and the Caribbean that is today embodied in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America.

The fruits of that project are palpable and undeniable in the form of reduced poverty, the near eradication of illiteracy, the millions of people whose sight has been restored thanks to Misión Milagros, and the medical and scientific brigades that have improved the quality of life in our countries. Those are just a few of the accomplishments achieved in a short time, and

despite the impact of the criminal embargo and of the international crisis generated and created by the capitalist economies.

The peoples and Governments of the world represented here will always stand with Cuba, our brother country and brother Government. We recognize its heroism, its solidarity, its humanism, its generosity and its commitment at those moments when our peoples have needed the friendly hand of brothers and sisters. Who else but Cuba has been the first to step forward when one of our peoples has had a need and sought unconditional human solidarity, whether in matters of health or education, or in the face of the blows of climate change?

It is precisely because of the determination of the Cuban people and Government always to stand with the world's poor that they are being attacked and blockaded and that their Socialist revolution is threatened with destruction.

This inhumane policy of the United States Government, which is continuing to implement this criminal embargo against the brotherly and beloved people and Government of Cuba, must end now. It has been clearly shown that no one supports these measures, which are aimed at breaking the spirit of independence, self-determination and international solidarity that is characteristic of the Cuban people and Government. It is time to rectify the situation, as these measures violate international law, human rights, humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. It is time that an end be put to the belief that they will break the steely resolve and the social spirit of the Cuban revolution.

Even the people of the United States do not support the embargo. Every day more voices are being heard from that country demanding that an end be put to this absurd and inhumane policy. One such United States voice calling for peace and reconciliation was that of Reverend Lucius Walker, whom we warmly remember for his determined humanism dedicated to putting an end to the blockade against Cuba, along with the Pastors for Peace and their Peace Caravans.

Latin America and the Caribbean strongly support Cuba, which is resolutely and firmly, in a spirit of creativity, resisting the embargo — this outdated policy of intervention in our region. Our region will go forward, hand in hand with its sister country Cuba, until the Government of the United States reflects on and rectifies its historic error.

The United States, by not implementing the resolutions of the General Assembly, is continuing to worsen the suffering of the brotherly Cuban people. The priority sectors most affected by the embargo are public health, food and education.

There have been other major economic sanctions and other forms of persecution against Cuban business and financial transactions. Nothing has changed that would lighten the burden on the people of Cuba. On the contrary, there has been a strengthening of the policy of strangulation against Cuba. The embargo remains the main obstacle to the economic and social development of Cuba. It is high time for the United States to put an end to this criminal embargo and also to stop helping self-confessed terrorists who continue to move freely in North American cities and together plan terrorist acts against the people and the Government of Cuba.

No longer is anyone fooled by the more than 50 years of terrorist acts against the people and the Government of Cuba. A gesture would be welcomed by the people of the world would be the immediate freeing of the four Cuban heroic patriots imprisoned in the United States and the immediate return to his homeland of the heroic René González, who has been on conditional release but must remain in the United States for years. This is an offence against justice not to free these heroes, who have defended their country with dignity and courage in the face of terrorist attacks perpetrated from the territory of the United States of America. We demand the immediate release of these Cuban anti-terrorist heroes. We convey our Sandinista greetings to them and to their families, and our immense respect for these brothers, sons of Martí and of the unwavering Cuban revolution.

We would like to express once again our strongest condemnation of the embargo against Cuba and of all coercive measures of a unilateral nature with extraterritorial effect, which contravene international law and the accepted norms of free trade. These are practices that not only pose a grave threat to peace and multilateralism and represent an insult to human values; they are also an obstacle to mutual understanding among and the well-being of nations. We thus condemn the use of unilateral coercive measures such as illegal sanctions against developing

countries aimed at preventing them from exercising their right to determine their own political, economic and social system.

Once again Nicaragua will vote in favour of draft resolution A/66/L.4, as will almost the entire international community represented here. We will be witnesses once again of the isolation of the Government of the United States and of its policy of always being on the opposite side of those who wish for peace. The international community will thus reiterate once again its message of peace and its strong support for Cuba in defence of its sovereignty and self-determination and in defence of its heroic revolution.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/66/L.4.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau

Draft resolution A/66/L.4 was adopted by 186 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions (resolution 66/6).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Sweden advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sobków (Poland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this explanation of vote.

Mr. Archondo (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The United States trade policy towards Cuba is fundamentally a bilateral issue. However, American legislation, such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, has extended the effects of the United States embargo to third-party countries. In the framework of its Common Commercial Policy, the European Union has firmly and continuously opposed such extraterritorial measures.

While recognizing the decision of the United States Government to lift restrictions on remittances and family travel to Cuba, we cannot accept that unilaterally imposed measures impede our economic and commercial relations with Cuba. To address this problem, the European Union Council of Ministers adopted, in November 1996, a regulation and a joint action to protect the interests of natural or legal persons residing in Europe against the consequences of these Acts. Furthermore, at the May 1998 European Union-United States summit, held in London, a package was agreed that also sought to alleviate the problems with extraterritorial legislation. It covered waivers to titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States Government to resist future extraterritorial legislation of that kind, and an understanding regarding disciplines for the strengthening of investment protection. It is urgent that the United States implement that agreement.

The European Union's policy towards Cuba was set out in a common position in 1996. Reaffirming the validity of that common position, in June 2008 the European Union lifted the restrictive measures imposed on Cuba in 2003. The dialogue with the authorities in Havana was resumed without preconditions and on the basis of reciprocity and non-discrimination. Five political dialogue ministerial sessions have been held with the Cuban Government to address issues of common interest, including human rights, which is a question at the core of relations with all third countries, including Cuba.

We reaffirm our determination to pursue a results-oriented comprehensive dialogue with the Cuban authorities, as well as with representatives of civil society and peaceful pro-democracy opposition, in accordance with EU policies. We reiterate the right of Cuban citizens to independently decide their future.

We are encouraged by the release of all political prisoners from the group of 75 who were imprisoned in 2003, together with other political prisoners. We reiterate our call on the Cuban Government to fully grant its citizens internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms, including the freedom of assembly and expression and free access to information; to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and, following the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, to extend invitations to other rapporteurs to visit Cuba.

The existing restrictions on rights and freedoms undermine and offset Cuban achievements in health care and education. Similarly, Cuba's domestic economic policy seriously hampers its own economic development. In that context, we note the adoption by the Cuban Parliament in August of a package of economic and social reforms, and expect that these will be extended and implemented in a manner that will address the key concerns of the Cuban population.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States contributes to the economic problems in Cuba, negatively affecting the living standards of the Cuban people. The European Union therefore believes that the lifting of the United States embargo would open the Cuban economy to the benefit of the Cuban people. Together, we again express our rejection of all unilateral measures directed against Cuba that are contrary to the commonly accepted rules of international trade. We urge the Cuban authorities to bring about real improvements in all areas mentioned.

In spite of continued concerns and criticisms about the human rights situation in Cuba, the States members of the European Union unanimously voted in favour of resolution 66/6.

Ms. Nujoma (Namibia): This year marks the twentieth anniversary since the presentation of the resolution that we have just adopted (resolution 66/6), but the blockade against Cuba is still in place. This stands in stark contrast to the overwhelming appeal by the international community to end this unjust policy against the people of Cuba. In fact, this debate would not have been necessary had the United States lifted the blockade years ago.

My delegation voted in favour of the resolution under agenda item 41, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", because we believe in the principle of peaceful coexistence among nations, respect for sovereign equality, open trade among nations and, above all, the spirit of good-neighbourliness. The imposition of the blockade against Cuba is an outdated form of punishment.

My delegation remains concerned about the promulgation and application of laws and measures constituting an economic, commercial or financial embargo against any friendly and peaceful country. We believe that the measures imposed against Cuba have serious negative implications for the overall development and well-being of the people of Cuba.

For many years, the General Assembly has, through its resolutions on this item, consistently rejected those sanctions and called for an end to the embargo imposed by the United States against the people of Cuba. The blockade is negatively affecting the economy and people of Cuba, especially women and children. It is therefore unfortunate that, today, the blockade remains intact and that the General Assembly is still seized of this issue.

My delegation has always maintained the view that the blockade against Cuba runs counter to the spirit of the United Nations Charter, international law and the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2). The same blockade continues to cause irreparable damage to the economic, social and cultural development of Cuba, as it deprives its people of the opportunities and benefits emanating from free trade.

The Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts are extraterritorial in nature and thus interfere with the sovereign rights of Cuba and violate the principles and rules of the international trading system. The blockade cannot be called an exclusive bilateral affair because it impacts numerous countries. The report of the Secretary-General highlights those points of concern.

We are convinced that the people of the two neighbouring countries would both stand to benefit from the normalization of relations and the removal of restrictions between them. The United States Government should therefore heed the appeal of the international community to end the blockade and promote good relations and neighbourliness with the Government and the people of Cuba.

In our view, all human rights, whether political, cultural or economic, are inseparable. They include the right to food, health and education and, above all, the right to development. Through the blockade, the people of Cuba are being denied those fundamental rights, just because of the political system they have chosen.

Guided by our conviction that the blockade against Cuba is a denial of the rights I have just highlighted, Namibia voted in favour of the draft resolution on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. We did so to express our solidarity with the people of Cuba, and we hope that the United States will listen to the international community's appeal to end the blockade against Cuba.

Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia): Every time the issue of lifting the United States sanctions on Cuba comes up, I am reminded of Humpty Dumpty, who said, "Words mean only that which I want them to mean".

When we talk about democracy, what is democracy, if the universal resolutions of the General Assembly that call on the United States to lift the sanctions on Cuba are routinely ignored? When we talk about the rule of law, what is the rule of law, if General Assembly resolutions that have declared United States sanctions illegal continue to be ignored? Is the law a law only when one decides that it is law? When we talk about the sovereign equality of States in the United Nations, is it equality only when it involves those whom we like? When we talk about freedom, is it freedom only when the views and political systems of other countries agree with one's own?

I thought that true democracy and true freedom embrace diversity: diversity of opinion, of thought, of political systems. Indeed, freedom also includes the right even to be wrong. My delegation has voted in favour of resolution 66/6 because that is the right thing to do.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.42

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

42nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 25 October 2011, 3.15 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Cazeau (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 41 (*continued*)

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/114)

Mr. Jahangiri (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Islamic Republic of Iran voted in favour of resolution 66/6, and would like to put on record the following explanation of vote following the resolution's adoption.

The overwhelming support for the resolution reflects yet again the common understanding and will of the international community concerning the inhuman and illegitimate embargo imposed by the United States on the Cuban Government and people. Depriving civilian populations of their economic and social rights infringes upon their basic human rights and is therefore illegal. Indeed, this is the main feature of sanctions as we know them today. Economic blockades and sanctions are completely illegitimate for the following reasons.

There is no case of economic sanctions against developing countries or territories where arrogant Powers are not behind those sanctions. Such sanctions have become a tool not for encouraging international peace and security but for imposing the hegemonic intentions of big Powers on other nations. Worst of all, sanctions, including ostensibly legitimate examples, always end by targeting the daily lives of civilians, with a dramatic impact on people's basic human rights. The victimization of ordinary, innocent people is a sine qua non of sanctions. There is ample evidence that sanctions above all imperil the economic growth and prosperity of civilians.

Despite all the damage that sanctions do, they have been proven to be futile. There is no strong proof that independent nations will compromise their valued national interests because of sanctions that reflect the antagonistic will of a hegemonic Power. The argument that sanctions are a better option than more peaceful measures is also irrelevant. Warmongers are not concerned about the sequence of punitive measures. They will undoubtedly resort to force whenever they deem necessary, with or without first using other means and with or without United Nations approval. Sanctions will not stop them from exercising force should they themselves find that desirable.

However, the most unjustifiable and deplorable form of sanctions is the imposition of unilateral blockades and the extraterritorial application of domestic laws on the part of one State, which, unsurprisingly, happens to be the United States of America. These affect not only the population on whom sanctions are imposed but also the interests of third parties, which are disproportionately and unreasonably punished. Numerous international documents have called for the immediate nullification of all such measures; indeed, one may wonder what

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

11-56354 (E)

Please recycle

more can be done to convince the Government of the United States to lift the inhuman and futile economic blockade against the Government and people of Cuba; what more should be said in arguing that such illegal measures flagrantly violate the United Nations Charter, the rule of international law, the multilateral trading system, the standards and principles governing relations among States, as well as the clear will of the international community — the will that has been unequivocally expressed in so many resolutions adopted by the Assembly.

The unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States serves no purpose other than inflicting tremendous hardship and suffering on ordinary civilians, especially women and children. The embargo has seriously jeopardized the legitimate rights and interests of Cuba and other States. It runs counter to the principles of international law and contradicts the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly rejects, and remains opposed to, the application of unilateral economic and trade measures by one State against another, as well as to the extraterritorial application and effects of national legislation on the sovereignty of other States. We oppose and condemn these measures or laws and their continued application and will do everything to effectively thwart them. We urge other States to do likewise and to refrain from recognizing, adopting or implementing extraterritorial or unilateral coercive measures or laws, including unilateral economic sanctions, other intimidating measures and arbitrary travel restrictions that are designed to exert pressure on other countries, threaten their sovereignty, independence and freedom of trade and investment, and prevent them from exercising their right to make decisions through their own free will.

The Islamic Republic of Iran shares the concern of the Cuban people and Government, and therefore emphasizes the urgent need to put an end to such inhuman measures against Cuba and other developing countries and to fully implement the resolution just adopted.

In conclusion, sanctions, whosoever imposes them and under whatsoever pretext or guise, remain illegitimate, futile and misguidedly punitive.

Mrs. Chikava (Zimbabwe): I too would like to commence with an expression of condolences to the Government and people of Turkey, who have been so tragically affected by the recent earthquake. We also acknowledge the presence here today of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba. He is most welcome to witness our deliberations.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (A/66/114). I also associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Argentina, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For the past 20 consecutive years, an overwhelming number of the States Members of the United Nations have voted in favour of the resolution calling for the lifting of the United States embargo against Cuba. Each year we have made it clear that the blockade is not only in violation of international law but it is also counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations set forth in its Charter, of which the United States of America is itself a founding signatory. The embargo violates Cuba's right to do business with the rest of the international community and, in the process, frustrates the country's efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It is clear that the embargo denies Cuba access to markets, development aid from international financial institutions and technology transfers, which are all important for the development of the Cuban economy and for the well-being and advancement of its people.

My country, Zimbabwe, fully understands the difficulties associated with these illegal and ill-conceived measures, as we are also a victim of similar unilateral measures. We reject the passing of laws and regulations on weaker and small nations by the more powerful with the goal of destabilizing them for regime change purposes. The people of Cuba must be left to themselves to pursue their own economic and social development agenda.

One of the ironies resulting from such pernicious measures is the bringing together of the Government and people of the country under punishment. National pride takes root to defeat this foreign interference. As we have done in the past, my delegation expresses its solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba. Accordingly, we voted in favour of resolution 66/6.

Mr. Morejón (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the presence in the Hall of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. Through him, we once again express to our brother country of Cuba our most sincere congratulations on this new triumph of the truth.

The great support that resolution 66/6 received in the voting is practically tantamount to a unanimous adoption, which makes this vote a historic one. Following the logic of common sense, this repeated appeal by the General Assembly should be sufficient to put an end to the cruel blockade against Cuba. The delegation of Ecuador voted in favour of resolution 66/6, as we believe that it is totally unacceptable to extend unilateral the extraterritorial measures against a third country, such as those contained in the United States Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996.

The blockade imposed against the brother Republic of Cuba is in violation of the fundamental tenets of international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles governing peaceful relations among States. The blockade causes serious economic and social damage to the Caribbean region and indeed has brought a humanitarian crisis of great magnitude to the brotherly Cuban people, as Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla explained to us in detail this morning.

In supporting resolution 66/6, Ecuador joins the majority of voices issuing from the States Members of the United Nations that demand without delay the immediate and unconditional end to all the unilateral measures imposed against our dear brother Republic of Cuba.

I repeat that Ecuador trusts that the logic of common sense and justice will prevail so that Cuba may enjoy its legitimate right to move forward without this searing and cruel blockade.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): Nigeria voted in favour of resolution 66/6. I would like to highlight the following salient issues that informed our action. Before doing so, however, let me commend the Secretary-General for his report (A/66/114) on the implementation of resolution 65/6, which calls for an end to the unilateral imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. I would also commend Member States for their positive response to the request contained in that resolution.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Argentina and Egypt, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively. We also associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Kenya, who spoke on behalf of the Group of African States.

Nigeria is fully committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations as contained in the Charter of the Organization, in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation. Nigeria believes in the inalienable right of every State to decide on the development model that suits its environment and people. In this regard, Nigeria maintains friendly relations with all States and does not favour unilateral punitive measures to settle political disputes, especially when applied extraterritorially.

My delegation is not comfortable with the continuation of the economic embargo imposed on Cuba, because of the obvious adverse economic impact and humanitarian consequences it has brought to the Cuban people. The embargo runs counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade — principles that we hold dear and which this body has nobly championed over the years. Thus, together with the overwhelming majority of the international community, Nigeria opposes the needless punishment of an innocent people and therefore favours dismantling not only the structures set up to enforce the embargo but also the logic underpinning its existence. It is against that backdrop that my delegation voted for the resolution.

Nigeria is not oblivious to certain positive effects of opposing the embargo. Although such a response is long overdue, Nigeria is nonetheless heartened by, and indeed welcomes, the position taken by the United States to remove a number of restrictions on travel to Cuba from the United States.

We reiterate that concerted engagement and peaceful negotiation remain the only acceptable means for advancing long-term peace and stability. We therefore appeal to the international community to exert all the possible necessary pressure on both Cuba and the United States to exercise more flexibility in moving towards greater constructive and productive

engagement, with a view to reaching a definitive resolution of their differences.

Such a démarche would lead not only to the lifting of the longest-lasting trade embargo in human history, but also to an improvement in the dignity of human coexistence and to the maintenance of international peace.

Mr. Thu (Myanmar): I take the floor to explain my delegation's position on resolution 66/6, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Since the resolution was first introduced, at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, in 1992, my delegation has taken a principled position to side with the people of Cuba, in particular the elderly, women and children. We hold a sympathetic view that the hardship and suffering caused by the unilateral sanctions dramatically affect the innocent people of Cuba. Myanmar fully subscribes to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, especially the principle of the sovereign equality of nations.

We firmly believe that only through peaceful coexistence and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries can international peace and security be sustainable. The true views of the international community are vividly expressed yearly by the adoption of this resolution, which calls for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo. The embargo against Cuba not only contradicts the principles of the Charter of the United Nations but also deviates from international law. For those reasons, as in previous years, Myanmar voted in favour of resolution 66/6.

Mr. Almeida (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): The economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba is an issue that has been before us for virtually 50 years. Today, for the twentieth time in its history, the General Assembly almost unanimously rejected the embargo. Once again, Brazil has asserted its unwavering support for that cause, voting in favour of resolution 66/6.

Among the many flagrant violations of international law that regrettably continue to affect international relations, few have outlasted the embargo. That situation is in contrast to the virtually unanimous acknowledgment that there is a need to lift it.

Besides being illegal, the blockade against Cuba has extremely damaging effects on the Cuban people, while also affecting the rights of third countries. An unequivocal, swift and decisive halt to the embargo would constitute an important step towards normalizing regional relations and promoting cooperation in the Americas.

In 2009, we noted initial progress towards an easing of the blockade. We welcome and are closely following the measures announced in January in Washington, D.C. Those measures, positive as they may be, do not fundamentally alter the embargo; nor do they mitigate the terrible effects it imposes on the Cuban people and on third countries.

We join the unmistakable voice of the international community calling for an end to the blockade against Cuba, as expressed once again in the clearest terms by this resolution.

Mr. Adi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to say that my country, Syria, aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the representative of Kazakhstan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations refer to the right of States to exercise sovereignty on their territory and the right to non-intervention in their internal affairs. Since its establishment, in 1945, the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations have referred to the sacred nature of those purposes and principles, which the Members of the United Nations should all respect insofar as the Charter is the constitution that represents the ultimate point of reference for the Organization.

Given that unilateral embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States, along with the new measures to tighten it, contradict the principles of international law, international humanitarian law and the rules and norms that govern relations between States — in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in their internal affairs and the freedom of international navigation and trade — this embargo is without doubt illegal. It contradicts the

criteria accepted by the international community for addressing the relations between States.

It also represents an unprecedented challenge to international law and to the legal credibility of American policies. In that regard, the Syrian Arab Republic would like to refer to the negative effects of such illegal unilateral measures on lives and societies around the world, especially in developing countries. We consider this a tool for Western hegemony that could lead to incitement against the West.

The majority of such measures are being imposed by Western countries, especially by the United States of America and European countries, in particular with the purpose of weakening the Governments of States that are Members of the United Nations or to exert pressure on them to force them to adopt certain measures or to change their policies. All those facts were confirmed by the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia that was contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/66/138, annex II).

The embargo imposed on Cuba for almost 50 years has created an unacceptable precedent that falls outside of international law. It has also subjected Cuba to all kinds of political, social and economic damage. It has deepened the suffering of the Cuban people. And it has placed the United States of America in direct confrontation with the international community. The embargo has affected the tireless efforts by the Cuban people to achieve welfare and progress. The embargo continues to harm the Cuban economy, at a cost of tens of billions of dollars — to say nothing of indirect damages, which also amount to tens of billions of dollars. Moreover, the embargo impedes the educational and social development of the Cuban people and deprives them of the opportunities and benefits of free trade. It also violates their basic human rights and freedoms, including the rights to life and development.

The General Assembly has discussed this item for 20 consecutive years. It has issued resolutions founded on its overwhelming collective consensus. However, the economic, financial, social and commercial embargo is still imposed on Cuba. The support of 186 countries for resolution 66/6 at this session confirms yet again that the vast majority of the international community finds it necessary to put an end to the embargo imposed on Cuba and that it is completely illegal.

Sanctions imposed by some States on developing countries, including sanctions by European countries and the United States against the Syrian Arab Republic, represent an ongoing collective punishment pursued by those States under the pretext of protecting human rights. They are a blatant violation of the principles of international law. They undermine the principle of the equal sovereignty of States. They constitute a violation of relevant General Assembly resolutions, the most recent being resolution 64/189. They also violate resolution 62/183 and resolution 65/217, entitled "Human rights and unilateral coercive measures", which states that unilateral economic measures damage trade relations among States and impede the full realization of the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments, specifically the right of individuals and peoples to development.

It is incumbent upon the General Assembly to take the measures necessary to put an end to the policies of embargo, unilateral economic sanctions and other hostile policies pursued by some States outside the framework of international law against both neighbouring and geographically distant countries.

The Syrian Arab Republic considers that such unilateral economic sanctions by the United States of America, the European Union and other States are a means of political and economic coercion that aim to impede the political independence and decision-making of the Syrian Arab Republic. Taking as a clear example of this the international community's rejection of the American embargo against Cuba and the Israeli embargo against Gaza, the Syrian Arab Republic and the overwhelming majority of States consider that the continued imposition by some States Members of the Organization of unilateral economic sanctions against developing countries represents a violation of the principles of international law and the rules of international trade. Such sanctions damage the economies and development efforts of developing countries, undermine international economic cooperation and impede international efforts to move towards an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trade system.

Those facts are confirmed by the summary of the *Trade and Development Report* of the United Nations

Conference on Trade and Development, which discusses the latest developments regarding the effect of unilateral sanctions on the trade of targeted countries, including the Syrian Arab Republic.

Sanctions affect mainly trade revenue, foreign exchange earnings and employment opportunities. They lead to the deterioration of economic and social conditions of populations, especially for middle- and low-income people. We hope that all forms of embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba will be lifted and that other embargoes will also lifted, including that against Syria. We hope that the voice of the international community represented by the General Assembly and other international organizations and institutions will be heard by the United States of America. We hope that the legislative branch in the United States will heed that voice.

It is for those reasons that we voted in favour of resolution 66/6.

Mrs. Waffa-Ogoo (Gambia): My delegation is of the view that, given the difficult challenges confronting all nations, big or small, rich or poor, this is neither the time nor the season to impose sanctions on States or to reinforce existing ones. Even in the best of times, sanctions, embargoes and economic blockades invariably inflict untold suffering on the citizens of the country being targeted by such punitive measures. As the global financial and economic crisis continues unabated, all nations are experiencing stress and are under constant pressure from the negative impacts of the crisis, and more so those that are targeted by blockades, such as the one carried on under the Helms-Burton Act, which has been unjustly imposed on Cuba by the Government of the United States since 1961.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba is an aggression on that sovereign State that puts its economy under siege, with the consequent negative downstream effects on ordinary Cubans, particularly vulnerable groups, resulting in the deterioration of their living standards. As many delegations have pointed out, the embargo continues to undermine the capacity of the heroic Cuban people to achieve sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

In the light of what I have just said, the Government of the Gambia has been consistent and unwavering in its support of the Government and people of Cuba, in denouncing the embargo at every opportunity and in calling on the United States to repeal the laws relating to the blockade of Cuba. The Gambia has voted in support of resolution 66/6, and we will continue to support the resolutions of the Assembly on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba until such time as the United States finally heeds the deafening calls by Member States and the international community and decides to put an end to the unjust punitive sanctions it has imposed on the people of Cuba.

In conclusion, I wish to align my statement with those made earlier by the representatives of Argentina, Egypt, Kenya and Kazakhstan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, respectively. In addition, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/66/114).

Mr. Daoud (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Because there is great awareness on the part of the international community and a total rejection by Member States of the adoption of unilateral coercive economic measures beyond a country's borders, and because such measures are a means of political and economic coercion, we are today considering agenda item 41, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba". The continued support for this resolution year after year is an indication of the total rejection of the unilateral embargo imposed on Cuba due to its blatant violation of the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the norms governing economic, financial and commercial relations among States.

The Government of the Sudan is pursuing a policy based on full respect for international law, the principles of the Charter and the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. In accordance with the position of the Sudan and with what I have just mentioned, my delegation condemns the imposition of economic and political sanctions on developing countries as a blatant violation of the Charter, and notes their destructive effects on the efforts of those countries to achieve sustainable development. My delegation therefore rejects unilateral sanctions, which since November 1997 have even affected our country, for they violate the legitimate

right of the people of the Sudan to choose the economic, social and political regimes conducive to achieving their aspirations and expectations.

The unilateral measures imposed by the United States against the Sudan continue to negatively affect the living conditions of the Sudanese people. They also hinder the Sudanese Government's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, eliminate poverty, strengthen health care and education and obtain the necessary technology to promote human and agricultural development.

Despite the economic and commercial embargo on the Sudan, my country continues to strengthen its bilateral, economic and political relations with developing countries, including countries of the South and many developed countries, which has had positive effects on its economic and social development to date.

The Sudan therefore calls for the establishment of a better world where all States, big or small, can peacefully coexist. Such peaceful coexistence will require the commitment of all States to the basic principles of the Charter and to managing inter-State relations in a sound manner.

In that respect, we urge the States that have taken unilateral measures or enacted legislation that affect the sovereignty of States to take the necessary steps to invalidate or repeal such measures, in line with strengthening respect for the sovereignty of other States and for the Charter of the United Nations. Such measures will also strengthen mutual cooperation aimed at achieving peace, development and prosperity for all peoples.

Mrs. Phommachanh (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): As in previous years, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has voted in favour of resolution 66/6, which was introduced in the Assembly by His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, whose presence here today we welcome.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

For the twentieth consecutive year, the General Assembly has adopted by an overwhelming majority a resolution calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States of America and calling on all States to respect the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law and to annul or repeal all laws resulting in extraterritorial effects that violate the sovereignty of States and the legitimate interests of entities and persons under their jurisdiction, as well as of freedom of trade and navigation.

Despite the repeated calls made by the General Assembly, the embargo and its extraterritorial effects remain fully in force. That is a grave violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter and of relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The embargo has also caused considerable economic and financial losses for Cuba. It hinders the efforts of the Cuban people to eliminate poverty, promote economic and social development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It also hinders their right to life and to development. It prevents Cuba from maintaining normal economic, commercial and financial relations with other countries. Consequently, the Lao People's Democratic Republic expresses its opposition once again to the economic, commercial and financial embargo which has been unilaterally imposed and maintained for a half century by the United States of America against Cuba.

We reiterate our support and unfailing solidarity with the Cuban people and we join the call made by the international community for the immediate end of the embargo imposed on Cuba and on its people.

Mr. Bart (Saint Kitts and Nevis): Saint Kitts and Nevis would like to add its voice in support of agenda item 41, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", and to give our reasons for voting in favour of resolution 66/6.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Belize and Argentina on behalf of the Caribbean Community and the Group of 77 and China, respectively.

Over the years, Saint Kitts and Nevis has had good relations with the United States of America. That country continues to be one of our closest and strongest partners. We respect the role that the United States of America has played in international relations and in the establishment and promotion of this very body. It is a global leader, and we acknowledge and remain grateful for its role in international affairs.

We recognize its recent concession on the matter of the Cuban embargo. However, that is not enough. Friends must tell friends when they are wrong or misguided, and must be prepared to speak truth to power when it is right to do so. Today, in supporting and voting for the resolution, Saint Kitts and Nevis, despite its size, continues to be an advocate of that truth.

This is an extremely important matter that goes to the very core of international law, sovereignty, non-intervention and the strengthened role of the United Nations in international affairs. For the past 20 years, Members have voted in favour of this resolution. This year, the resolution continues to have the overwhelming support of the international community. Saint Kitts and Nevis, in its contribution to the report of the Secretary-General (A/66/114) on this matter, advised that we do not support or apply any laws or measures that restrict the free flow of international trade. We also advised that we do not apply laws with extraterritorial effect that impinge on the sovereignty of other States and the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction. This is a principled position adopted by Member States of this body.

Saint Kitts and Nevis therefore feels very strongly about bringing the embargo imposed on Cuba to an end. Cuba is one of our closest allies and is a pan-Caribbean partner. It has aided in the development of the health care system and other areas in Saint Kitts and Nevis. There is much from which the international community has benefited and can benefit in cooperating with Cuba, just as Saint Kitts and Nevis has benefited.

We see this embargo as a burden on our brothers and sisters in Cuba. The negative impact on the economy of that small developing State is quite profound, and unfair to the people of Cuba. The international community remains in the grip of a global recession. While many of us rely on partnership with other countries to recover, Cuba remains stunted by the embargo and unable to contribute to the economies of scale generated by such great partnerships. This goes against the very principle of partnership and free trade — the very principles held dear by those who support the embargo. The fact that the overwhelming majority of Member States continue to support the resolution is compelling evidence that the embargo is wrong. The impact that the embargo continues to have on access to modern medical technology and drugs cannot be ignored.

This embargo is wrong on all levels, but none more so than on humanitarian grounds. We implore all Member States to respect the sanctity of the General Assembly and the decisions it makes. Failure to do so is an affront to multilateralism and undermines the functioning of the United Nations system. It is my delegation's hope that the two countries, Cuba and the United States of America, can improve their relationship and embark on a process of partnership and cooperation.

There is much we can learn from each other, but the embargo remains an impediment to that progress. That is why Saint Kitts and Nevis supports resolution 66/6 and voted in favour of it, and why we repeat our call on both countries to find common ground so that the entire international community can move on from this impasse. We call on the United States to discontinue this embargo, because, for all the good the United States may do, the embargo continues to stain its image and character.

Mr. Sin Son Ho (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to sincerely congratulate the Cuban delegation on the overwhelming support for the adoption at this morning's meeting of resolution 66/6, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". It is another victory in the just struggle of the Cuban people to oppose foreign pressure and coercive acts and to foster their country's development.

It has been 20 years since this resolution was first officially introduced for consideration at the General Assembly, resulting in the adoption of resolution 47/19. In the past few decades, many documents have been adopted at major international and regional meetings, including at the General Assembly and at the Summits of the Non-Aligned Movement, denouncing the United States embargo against Cuba. Demand continues to grow at the global level for the termination of the United States unilateral coercive measures against Cuba. Nevertheless, the unilateral and immoral United States embargo on Cuba, which was imposed half a century ago, still remains in place, even today, after the first decade of the new century has already ended. It causes serious problems for the

Cuban Government and people in their efforts towards economic and social development, inflicting hundreds of billions of dollars in economic damage on the country. The embargo, being extraterritorial in nature, also seriously affects third countries that have economic and commercial relations with Cuba.

It is evident that the United States embargo on Cuba is aimed at overthrowing the social system freely chosen by the Cuban people. All these facts prove clearly that the United States leaves no stone unturned in pursuing its political agenda, and that it unilaterally defies recognized international law and the unanimous demands of the international community. My delegation strongly condemns the United States embargo against Cuba, considering that it violates the United Nations Charter and international law in every aspect, and also flagrantly and massively infringes upon the sovereignty and right to development of Cuba and its people. My delegation takes this opportunity once again to urge the United States to lift the unilateral, illegal and extraterritorial economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as soon as possible, in response to the demand of the overwhelming majority of Member States.

Finally, my delegation expresses its continuing support for, and solidarity with, the Cuban Government and people in their active struggle to safeguard their sovereignty and work for their just cause in the face of this unprecedented United States embargo.

Mr. Stancanelli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina voted in favour resolution 66/6 and will fully implement its provisions, as we did with regard to the previous General Assembly resolutions on the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba.

Argentina's act No. 24871, promulgated on 5 September 1997, established a legislative framework for the scope of foreign laws on Argentine territory. Its first article states that foreign laws are not valid when they claim to have extraterritorial effect by means of an economic embargo or restriction of investments in a specific country designed to lead to a change of Government in that country or to affect its right to self-determination. Argentina's vote in favour of adopting this resolution reflects our traditional position of support for doing away with this kind of unilateral measure, as well as our commitment to the United Nations Charter, international law and multilateralism.

The embargo against Cuba contravenes the rules of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. However, despite the reiterated and almost unanimous calls for its elimination from the international community, and from the Assembly in particular, the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba endures. Argentina joins the almost unanimous rejection of the embargo and reiterates its position against such measures and its support for Cuba against the blockade.

Mr. Hamza (United Republic of Tanzania): Thank you, Sir, for granting me this opportunity to speak after the voting. My delegation aligns itself with the statements made, respectively, by the representatives of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Kenya on behalf of the Group of African States.

Please allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/66/114) on the implementation of resolution 65/6.

As we have done in previous years, this year the United Republic of Tanzania again joined other Member States to vote in favour of resolution 66/6, on ending the economic and financial embargo on Cuba. We have voted in support of the people of Cuba, who have suffered economically and socially for so long.

My delegation believes that the Cuban people have the right, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations, to live as meaningful and as prosperous a life as any other human being in the world. The United Republic of Tanzania would like once again to reiterate its continued support for the people of Cuba in ending the embargo.

For many consecutive years, and by an overwhelming majority, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions that demand an end to the economic, trade and financial blockade and embargo policies against Cuba. Unfortunately, however, despite all the resolutions and repeated calls by this body and other international agencies, the citizens of Cuba continue to suffer as if the international community did not care.

The United Repuolic of Tanzania has always believed that an embargo of any magnitude has an adverse effect on the common people. It is always the people who suffer the most. In my country we have a

saying that says that whenever bulls fight it is the grass that gets hurt. It is high time for the suffering to end once and for all.

While we welcome the encouraging steps taken by the United States since 2009, the embargo nonetheless remains largely intact. It continues to severely constrain Cuba's development and the improvement of its citizens' standard of living. We believe that more remains to be done to ease the suffering of Cuban citizens.

The United Republic of Tanzania is of the view that an amicable solution could be reached as soon as possible if only the two parties could show political will to do so. We strongly support and believe in direct dialogue between the two parties. We therefore urge them to sit down to iron out their differences for the betterment of Cuban citizens.

Ms. Gomes (Angola): The delegation of Angola voted in favour of resolution 66/6, which I gladly welcome.

After many years of the economic, financial and commercial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, the Republic of Angola joins the international community in calling for an end to that measure, which has lasted more than half a century and constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights and of the rights of the people of Cuba.

For 20 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted a resolution urging all countries, in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, to withdraw all laws, regulations and extraterritorial measures that undermine the sovereignty of States and the legitimate rights and interests of entities and persons under the jurisdiction of those States and affect their freedom of trade and navigation.

We remain perplexed that the United States embargo against Cuba remains in place. The extraterritorial policies arising from the embargo constitute a violation of the sovereignty of States and an encroachment upon the rights of persons, entities, institutions and companies and upon the jurisdiction of such States to establish or propose economic, commercial, financial, scientific or technical relations with the Republic of Cuba, to the detriment of that country's social and economic development.

We appeal to the international community to continue its efforts to support a deeper engagement by both countries in constructive dialogue in order to identify a definitive solution to the problem. That problem is man-made, and its solution depends only on goodwill. We reiterate our appeal for such political goodwill.

According to the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/66/114, there has been no progress towards ending the embargo, even with the timid measures announced by the United States Administration, which extended the embargo for an additional year, thereby worsening the impact of its measures. The embargo goes beyond the financial and commercial relations between the United States and Cuba. Its effects in this globalized world severely penalize the Cuban people, since the embargo prevents the implementation of economic programmes aimed at the socio-economic stability of that island.

By adhering to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, namely, respect for all relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Republic of Angola reaffirms its commitment to the norms of international law that support the need to eliminate coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic persuasion.

In that context, the Government of Angola voted in favour of the resolution, since the embargo is in flagrant violation of the right of sovereignty and equality among States, as well as the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): A representative has asked to take the floor in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind delegations that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor now to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to express my thanks for the professional and fair solution found to the breakdown of the voting machine this morning.

The only justification for my speaking at this stage in the debate is the flagrant lies put forward by Mr. Godard this morning. You can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time. This morning's statement by the

representative of the United States was lifted directly from the one they made last year and in 2009. Mr. Godard came here to defend the policies of President Bush from 2005. He also spoke to defend the policies of Mr. Obama, except in 2009. One has to ask whose policies he is defending.

I have here a copy of the *Daytona Beach Morning Journal* dated 16 May 1972, stating that Mr. Ronald D. Goddard, the director of the Miami Office of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, had been reassigned to Washington. Mr. Goddard, who had been a Peace Corps volunteer — carrying out very interesting missions, about which little is known, in Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, Chile and Turkey, as well as other projects related to Central America — was from 1969 to 1972 the head of the Miami Office of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs.

Another declassified official document states, as a sixth point, that the Coordinator will take on the same responsibility for covert operations as for legal ones. However, I agree with him that the blockade is just one facet of the United States policy against Cuba. He is certainly well aware that the other principal aspect is that of internal subversion, the deployment of agents in the service of the United States in our territory, and the carrying out of covert operations by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Central Intelligence Agency, with millions of dollars in funding, about which we know only a part.

As I have read out on many occasions the provisions of the Geneva Convention on genocide, I will ensure that a copy of it reaches the desk of the United States.

The Government of the United States is responsible for many extrajudicial executions, some carried out by means of drones or unmanned aircraft, in which American citizens and minors have been among those killed. It is responsible for torture, kidnapping, 1,245 covert flights and secret jails in Europe. It also maintains a concentration camp where torture is used on the land it is illegally occupying in Guantánamo, Cuba.

The United States and Cuba are not trading partners. The possibility of purchasing food, under difficult circumstances, in the United States is the result of the endeavours of those sectors that oppose the policy of the blockade. Such purchases are made under very strict regulations that cannot be described as trade relations, even less as measures indicating flexibility. They flout all the provisions of the international trading system.

Mr. Goddard deliberately lied by using two sets of statistics at this meeting. Specifically, he included in the so-called donations of humanitarian aid to Cuba funds that USAID uses to undermine constitutional order in my country; remittances that Cubans living in the United States send to their family members, despite official regulations and restrictions; and donations that non-governmental organizations provide with great difficulty, given the position of the United States Government, and which in 2010 were extremely scanty.

The United States has better things to do than wage wars that have killed more than a million civilians. Instead of destabilizing foreign Governments, it would do better to heed the voices of its own people. Near where we are now, on Wall Street, instead of brutally repressing its citizens, it should listen to what they are saying. They are complaining that there is no true democracy when everything is determined by economic power, when corporations put profits before the protection of people, when egoism triumphs over justice, when inequality and oppression prevail in the Government. People complain that they have lost their homes, their pensions and their social security programmes, while the rich continue to receive shocking bonuses. They complain that students are burdened by debt, the courts of justice are corrupt, and that millions of dollars are being spent to eliminate health insurance contracts for workers. They also lament the fact that the United States participates in the torture and assassination of innocent civilians extraterritorially and that it perpetuates colonialism.

A total of 1,972 people have been executed in that country since 1976 as a result of judicial errors. More than 3,000 United States citizens are currently on Death Row. A few weeks ago, even as the General Assembly debate was being held, the world was aghast at the unjust execution of Troy Davis.

So when Mr. Goddard says that the American citizen and USAID contractor was brought to justice in Cuba for having provided Internet access to the Jewish community, he knows perfectly well, being a specialist in that area, that Mr. Gross was carrying out a covert

operation and that he had committed crimes that are also punishable under United States law.

In Cuba, children want to know why in that country terrorists are left free and anti-terrorists are jailed. The five anti-terrorist fighters from Cuba have suffered under cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions for the only crime of trying to prevent the commission of terrorist acts against the people of the United States. They must all be freed, even the one who is on conditional release and cannot rejoin his family. That would be an act of justice, and, at the very least, a humanitarian one. Only in a country such as the United States would the Chair of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs — a fierce woman — pay tribute to the international terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, who was responsible for the bombing of a civilian aircraft in mid-flight, and refer to the members of a children's theatre troupe visiting the United States as spies and terrorists.

The political battle being waged today clearly shows, as Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz wrote yesterday in an article on the genocidal role of NATO, "the need to put an end not just to the blockade but also to the system that engenders injustice on our planet, degrades its natural resources and jeopardizes human survival.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the only speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 41?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.